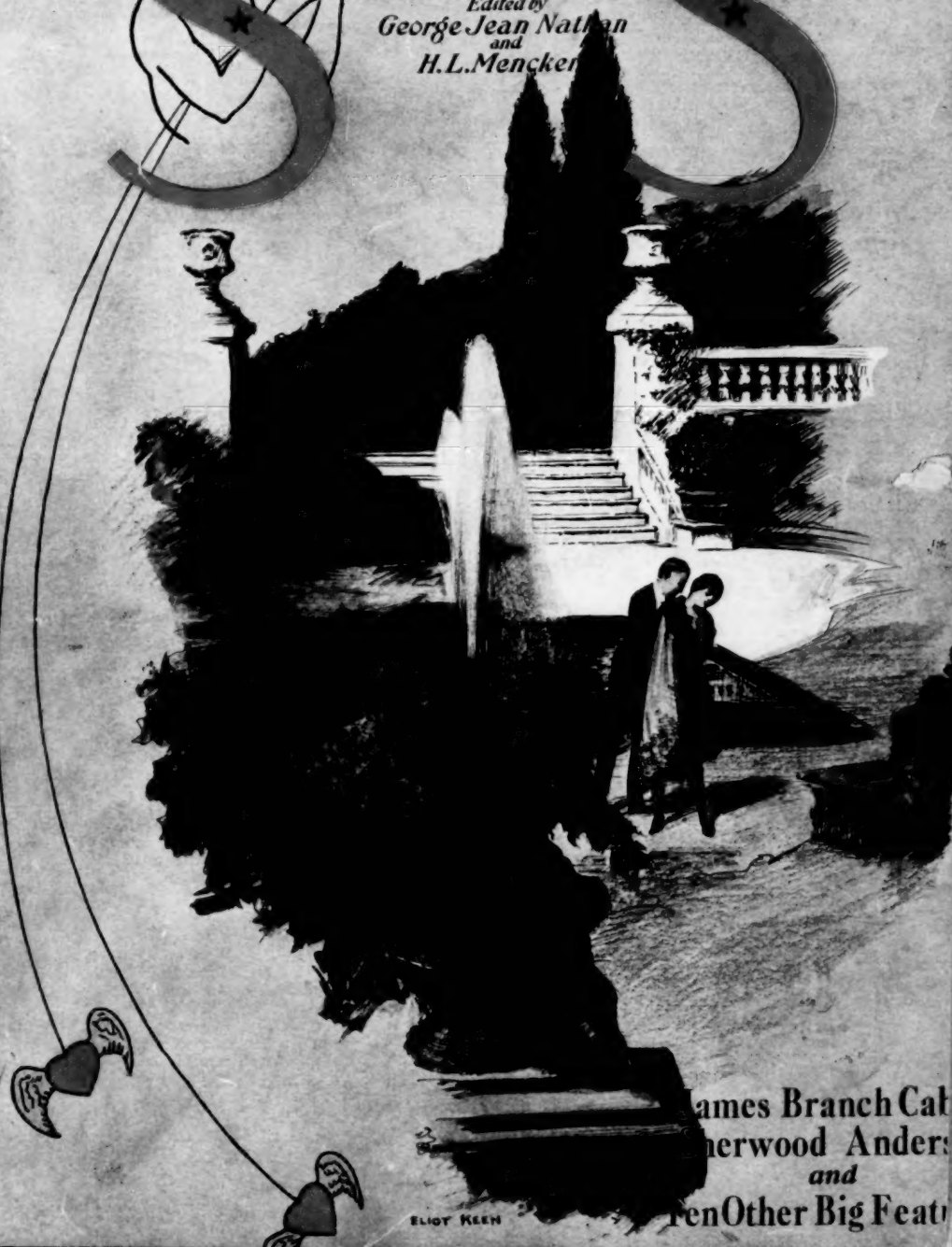


JULY, 1921

35 Cents

The SMART SET

Edited by
George Jean Nathan
and
H.L. Mencken



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Elf Wife

By Abigail W. Cresson

HERE'S a fire I've lighted,
Here's a hearth I've swept,
Here's a dozen vows I've made—
One I've kept.

*Do you think to chide me
For the ones I break
When I keep the hardest one
For your sake?*

*'Neath your roof I'm staying
Who am sick to run
Free along the windy hills
In the sun.*

*Oh, the house is tidy
And the bread is sweet,
Both my hands obedient
And my feet.*

*Since you have my duty,
Why is it you start
Begging, coaxing, scolding me
For my heart?*



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No. 3

The SMART SET

The
Aristocrat
Among
Magazines



Meditations

By W. L. Werner

I

MAN, appalled at his own infinitesimality, always seeks the company of an inferior being to keep up his morale. Some persons employ business help; some persons do charity work; some persons marry and have families; and some persons keep a dog or a cat or a parrot.

II

NUMBERS are sacred. When two men fight, it is the devil in them displaying himself. When two millions of men fight, their respective gods march with the armies.

Numbers are moral. When two men disagree, we say that the right is somewhere between them. When two millions disagree, we say that the majority is right.

III

LAWS are made by a majority of the most forceful and popular persons in a democracy; this combination of forcefulness and popularity is called Justice.

IV

A MAN who is attracted to a woman by her naïveté, and who marries her, is then distracted by her childishness.

V

PRIMITIVE man struggled between his better and his worse self, but the poor fellow had no names for his desires. We have named our upward inclinations religion and morality and love, and our downward inclinations are labelled instincts and passions and suppressed desires. This makes the struggle much

more interesting, but it is still a struggle. . . . Analogy: As a patient feels satisfied when a doctor finds a name for his disease, so we read books on psychology and are content.

VI

OUR ancestors invented a series of numbers to enable them to handle their knowledge better. We have developed this series into an independent system of knowledge that we call the perfect science, mathematics.

Illustration: A football team advanced halfway toward the goal line and then rested. "Let us move the goal posts here," said the clever ones, "and then we shall have won the game."

VII

THERE is one sure way to fame, and it consists in merely keeping alive. Any man who can live for a hundred or two hundred years will be famous.

VIII

STORIES about sex lead to immorality. Stories about crime lead to crime. Stories about war lead to war. Stories

about mother-love lead to mother-love. Stories about innocence lead to innocence. Stories about one-legged scissors grinders lead to one-legged scissors grinders. . . . And so on, *ad nauseam*, as though life itself were not eternally challenging and defeating all the fiction of all the world!

IX

RELIGION is the perfect antidote to life. To the poor man it is splendour; to the rich man, simplicity. For the sinner it emphasizes forgiveness; for the righteous, original sin. To the strong it preaches love; to the tender, power. The first shall be last, and the last, first. Thus does man create religion out of what he is not, and then spends his life in a ceaseless, unavailing struggle not to be himself.

X

WHEN a man first sacrifices something in his own career for the sake of his children, then and then only is it time for him to begin writing books. Before that moment, life is more important than literature.



MARRIAGE makes a man take his eyes off other women. Marriage makes a woman keep hers on other women.



SOME men prefer originality and some marry widows.



A Dollar Forever

[A Complete Novelette]

By L. M. Hussey

CHAPTER I

SOMEbody was ringing the front doorbell, and she was alone in the house. At first she thought it might be a canvasser or a beggar, and for a time she remained in bed, distressed by the noise, wishing that the clamour, very loud to her aching head, would cease. But the one who signalled at the front door was persistent, the noise of the bell sounded again and again, and at last she arose, walked painfully through her room and slowly began the descent of the front stairs.

Her tall figure was wrapped in an old blue and white dressing gown that clung with the amplitude of a sheet about her emaciated body. To relieve the almost unbearable sense of internal pressure that accompanied her devastating headaches, a towel was passed tightly about her forehead and looped up into a large knot at the back of her head; strands of reddish uncombed hair escaped under the edges like excelsior from a burst parcel. At every downward step her head throbbed enormously, hammers beat in accelerated blows at her temples; she clenched her teeth to endure the pain.

She opened the door, and a delivery man in a dirty blue uniform looked up at her. His cap was worn back over one ear, he was whistling a loud tune, his hands were pushed down into his pockets. On the porch, at his feet, there was a large, curiously shaped package, wound with brown paper and string.

"Weaver?" he asked.

"I'm Mrs. Weaver," she said.

He produced from one of his pockets a small package of dirty delivery sheets.

"Sign for it here," he said.

Mrs. Weaver took the slip and the pencil that he thrust into her hands, steadied the bit of paper against the door jamb, and painfully inscribed her name. The delivery man lifted the package and placed it in her arms. It was moderately heavy and she staggered a little under its weight.

But already, as she turned back into the house, she was smiling a little, the drawn lines of her thin face had relaxed, her drooping eyes, heavy with a day's suffering, had widened. She carried the bundle back through the hall into the dining-room, where she lifted it to the table and began to unwind the paper swathing. A quantity of cotton batting fell down upon the table and, out of the cerements, a gaudy, flowered vase stood revealed as if by a conjurer's trick. The woman dropped her hands and contemplated it.

She was unconscious now of her throbbing head; two spots of colour lighted her cheeks like the flush of a consumptive fever, her lips were parted, her eyes were widely opened.

She gave herself up to the contemplation of the vase with a sort of passion that had the commingled qualities of a miser's gloating and an aesthete's absorption in the beautiful. She carefully turned the ornament about, observing the flowered decorations, and at last she lifted it up and critically examined the blue-stamped manufacturer's mark on the bottom. She sighed lengthily, like one who has eaten and satisfied a pro-

longed hunger. It was hers now, another thing, another possession.

True, it was not legally her own, must be paid for week by week in the familiar way, but hers to all purposes; that made her glad.

A subtle, inward pride added a fresh degree of feverish colour to her cheeks, for she found a deeply satisfying emotion in the contemplation of such a purchase. It was not a useful thing; it served no purpose save the one of ornamentation. A kind of pleasure like the delight of a forbidden and immoral act animated her senses as she looked at the vase and thought of its uselessness. This, indeed, was another evidence of her success, her progress, her winning struggle. Ten years before she would not have dreamed of buying a vase!

She was about to lift up the ornament again and carry it out of the room, when she heard someone open the front door, a girl's voice called to her. It was her daughter Lucy.

"I'm in the dining-room, Lucy," she answered. "Come here."

The girl passed through the hall and came into the room carrying three or four school books under her arm. She was tall, like her mother, but less thin; there was a certain litheness in her slender figure. Her face had, in a way, a curious charm. The mouth was weak, the nose a little too small, but the eyes were arresting. They were set slantwise, unlike the older woman's, but were blue as hers were blue, and fringed with extraordinarily thick lashes. These dark-fringed eyes gave her a deceptive appearance, and, though she was no more than sixteen, you might have supposed her eighteen or twenty.

"Oh, that's pretty!" she exclaimed, looking at the vase. "When did it come?"

"Just now. I was about to carry it into the parlour."

"Gee, we're getting swell. Won't Dad be sore, though!"

Mrs. Weaver flushed a little and lines of indignation marked her long face.

"Mad! I pay for everything I buy.

What right has your father to be mad? What did he ever buy for me?"

The girl did not answer, but stooped over the vase, examining it. Apparently her interest in the relations of her father and mother were perfunctory, for she did not take sides with her mother's indignation and seemed indifferent to it.

After a moment she looked at her mother again.

"Have you another headache?" she asked.

Mrs. Weaver touched her head, and then, after a hesitation, unwound the slovenly turban and laid it on a chair.

"Terrible," she answered. "I've been in bed all afternoon. But it's better now."

Lucy said nothing, and watched her mother as she lifted up the heavy vase, following her when she carried it into the parlour.

It was a small and fabulously crowded room. There was much in this room to suggest a prosperous second-hand shop. Thick, upholstered chairs peopled the floor space like numerous courtiers in attendance upon the royal presences of a monstrous table and an immense, diabolic sofa. Impossible flowers bloomed profusely upon the upholstered cloth of the chairs and sofa. There was a mantelpiece, painted white, and beneath it an imitation fireplace with small gas logs made of asbestos. The mantel displayed an abandon of ornamentation: a fanciful lion sculptured in yellow clay, a china cupid with a bow and quiver painted gold, a tall china woman with upraised hand supporting some kind of carrotty vegetable on her shoulder, two or three minor vases of divers shapes, a large clock with marble columns and an ornately lettered face. The wall above the mantel and all about the room was occupied with twenty or more pictures and several curious pictorial ornaments, in frames, of a Japanese nature, illustrating figures woven out of straw. A remarkably lifelike parrot, made of painted iron, hung in a gilded ring in front of the window.

Mrs. Weaver carefully placed the new and gorgeous vase on the floor and then

removed several of the minor ornaments from the mantel. After a rearrangement she placed the new possession in the space provided by her manœuvres, and here it shared the glories of the mantelpiece with the ornate clock, a regal pair amongst the lesser impedimenta.

Lucy said that the vase looked pretty, and then, losing her interest, stated that she was going out for an hour or two before supper.

It occurred to the older woman that Lucy was never strongly interested in anything, unless, perhaps, her childish wish to become a motion-picture actress could be called an enthusiasm.

Mrs. Weaver turned a moment and watched her go, listened to the sound of the front door closing, and then drew in and expelled a brief, sighing breath. Lucy, she thought, was a disappointment to her. She took the life that was afforded her for granted, like a pet animal that is sheltered and fed and remains forever incurious.

Vaguely, scarcely understanding, the older woman hungered for appreciation, for an eye to see her achievement, for a word of admiration, for an imagination to comprehend the increased amplitude of her life, measured from the time when she had lived in the extreme poverty of her parents' home until now, when the passion for accumulating things had filled a whole house with the offerings of a dozen credit stores. Lucy did not understand her efforts. Lucy had never been, as she had been, hungry, or found herself without a dress to wear on the street.

With a suppressed longing, Mrs. Weaver turned and looked about her parlour, appraising her things with an affectionate eye, as if she herself had given them birth out of her flesh and blood. The room, no room in her house, was too crowded in her sight. Her glance passed over everything, the numberless stuffed chairs, the bulging sofa, the gargantuan table, a bookcase filled with the volumes of an unread encyclopedia, a phonograph of veneered oak in the corner, a smaller table near the win-

dow with a linen cover embroidered in large, crimson roses, supporting three family portraits in tarnished silver frames, a lamp on a pedestal with a beaded, canary shade. There were still spaces, discernible to her, wherein she could accommodate future possessions, and, above all, by a condensation, she saw the way to provide for the object of her most florid acquisitive dreams—a grand piano.

Perhaps, when she could at last purchase this, Lucy would exhibit a musical aptitude, learn to play! A warm expectancy thrilled her, like a lover's hopes. Perhaps she might buy it soon now. It would not, when some other payments were concluded, be a superlative burden.

"A little down, then five dollars a week," she murmured to herself.

The ornate clock struck a clamorous hour, and she was suddenly taken out of her dreams by the material necessity of preparing supper. Giving a final glance to the new vase, she left the room, ascended the stairs again and, divesting herself of the blue and white dressing-gown, replaced it with a soiled pink house dress. Her headache, in the excitement of receiving the vase, had lost its acute character, only a dull throbbing remained, and a sense of soreness, that she ignored as something common and endurable.

She went to the kitchen and began the business of cooking. This irritated her; it was an old irritation, for she regarded the time spent in her kitchen as lost upon something necessary but unremunerative.

Her recent passion of acquisition was dulled, the pleasure in the new purchase no longer engaged her emotions. As she moved about the kitchen, cutting up potatoes, opening a can or two, setting water to boil, she was troubled by the realization that her entire afternoon had been lost. Her forehead was cut into numerous fine lines by a frown, her lips were compressed and turned downward.

There was a dress she had hoped to complete for one of her customers that afternoon; the money was urgently needed to pay certain installments al-

ready due. Again one of her headaches had upset her plans.

Waiting for the water to boil, she began to wonder what she could do about her periodic headaches. If anything, they were growing more frequent. First she would take a cold. She took colds for no reason, no matter what precautions were observed, and then, coincident with each fresh cold the headaches would devastate her like the curse of a malignant deity.

Pills, elixirs, emulsions, tonics—every medicament she found in the advertisements of the daily papers—were tried with a sceptic hope, and none availed. Once she had spent the money to see a physician, and he, too, had prescribed a pill; it sufficed no better than the others. Her faith in doctors was slight. Their charges were excessive, and in the end they seemed to accomplish very little.

The steam from the boiling water, flavoured with the aromatic odour of pepper and vegetables, transpired into the small space of the kitchen, and in this vaporous atmosphere Mrs. Weaver moved, with her compressed lips and her joyless eyes, like a spirit condemned to the torture of a subtle inferno. Presently she heard the door open in the front hall; it was slammed shut and a hard step sounded, approaching. Her body stiffened a little, seemed to set itself for a certain defense; it was her husband.

He came into the kitchen and she greeted him without looking up from the stove. He did not reply to her greeting, but exploded at once into a vehement statement.

"Lucy's monkeyshines have got to stop, got to stop confounded quick!"

Mrs. Weaver turned and regarded him now with some surprise. He met her eyes and glared at her.

"When I got off the car," he said, "she was standing on the corner like a common mill dollie with three of those young snips that wear tight clothes and high collars. She saw me right away, and I made a motion with my head for her to come along home with me, but she had the nerve to smile at me as if I was try-

ing to be pleasant with her. I'm not going to have my daughter standing on the street corner like a mill dollie. I know the kind of young snips that stand around and talk to her. She's being brought up in a decent home. I've told her for more than the last time. Why don't you have a little control over her?"

He spoke vehemently, in a somewhat hoarse voice, and with an angry intonation, as if the woman he addressed had personally affronted him through the conduct of their daughter. His attitude was aggressive, his short, thick body swayed a little with his words, his heavy jaw protruded beyond the outermost point of his flat nose.

Mrs. Weaver, angered by his attitude and words, framed a vigorous reply, but left it unsaid, for a premonition that any excitement might renew her headache gave her discretion. She said nothing. She shrugged her shoulders and went on with her cooking. The masterful assumptions of her husband annoyed and disgusted her, for she felt inwardly that she herself was entitled to the ruling word, since most of their material advancement came through her efforts. Weaver's share was negligible. He had never earned much money. As a dress-maker she quadrupled the sum of his earnings.

He stood waiting for her to reply, and when he observed the contemptuous rise and fall of her shoulders his anger was intensified. Then he fought the familiar battle betwixt his impulse to lay hands on his wife and physically hurt her and the restraining influence of his fear. Always on the point of knocking her down, he had never yet achieved the courage of the act. Without making the mental admission in words, he felt himself inferior to her. She was cleverer than himself and more resourceful. He feared the extent of her resources in the event of a physical encounter.

So he remained silent and watched her, and as he watched her he thought disparagingly of her appearance; he wondered if she ever looked into a mirror, and what she thought of her skinny face, her wrinkles, her scraggly red hair.

It comforted him to find her unlovely, and assuaged his self-respect. At least her cleverness was not equal to improving her looks; she was a bad-looking woman. That was failure enough for a woman—to have grown thin, ugly and haggish, like a starved cat.

Mrs. Weaver, moving amongst the supper things, was aware of her husband's scrutiny. His ineffectual presence enlarged her contempt. She wondered why he was there, what significance in a useful sense he had in her life. He was useless to her, but it did not occur to her that she would ever be rid of him. She accepted him as a condition of life, like the necessity of drinking water and taking food. She had long ago forgotten her first impressions of him, when the possession of a man had enlivened her mind with dreams.

Her morose thoughts were interrupted by the noisy opening and closing of the front door. Lucy was coming in. She saw her husband turn and glare out into the hall. This evening his absurd sense of authority had broken out in his mind like the relapse of a recurring disease. A wordy wrangle with Lucy was inevitable. Her tired nerves rebelled against the strain of listening. She was almost inclined to put the supper things on the table and then go up to her room, entering the excuse of her headache. But she seemed devoid of sufficient energy to make her escape.

CHAPTER II

MR. WEAVER, yielding to his animal instincts, said nothing until he had filled himself with meat and potatoes. He sat at the head of the table, intensely grim, like an executioner with a personal animosity against the condemned. He disposed of the eatables on his plate, gulped his hot coffee noisily, and then, raising his head, looked about the room with severe displeasure.

His eyes, like oversized black beads, glittered with hard lights.

"This room is so damned crowded with nonsense that a man can hardly take a free breath," he announced.

He looked about angrily. He passed

his displeased eye over the ornate side-board, the innumerable articles of tarnished silver, the china closet crammed like a museum case with several sets of dishes, the large Japanese gong standing on a pedestal in the corner, the supernumerary chairs. He rested his gaze for a moment on a large stuffed fish, dusty and discoloured, that was fastened to the wall.

"There ought to be an auction here," he said. "Sell out a lot of this foolishness."

Mrs. Weaver coloured, but remained silent. His words stirred her with a double anger, for he lacked the moral right to complaint, since everything in this room was her own, everything in the whole house, the house itself, purchased with her own earnings; and secondly, it angered her to find him callous to her efforts, unaware of her struggle, uncognizant of her ambition, indifferent to the home she had created by her urge to possess something. He did not care about ownership. He was too lazy and incompetent to acquire anything.

"There's some things," Weaver went on, "that have got to be understood here. There's got to be a head to everything. I'm the head of this family. Well, there's not going to be any goings on!"

Lucy, who had been eating in silence, arose from the table and began to walk, with the indifference of a deaf person, toward the door.

"Hey!" cried Weaver. "I'm talking to you!"

Lucy turned with some surprise and looked at her father. Her slanting eyes and intensely arched brows endowed her face with a perpetual air of superiority. One foot was poised in front of her, her slender body was balanced forward, and an obvious impatience was betrayed in the lines of her arrested body.

"Your mother is too busy paying a dollar down and a dollar forever to bother about your character," he said. "But I'll take a hand. I don't want to see you loafing around like a mill dollie on the street corners!"

The girl flushed, and the plethora of blood in her face brought out into promi-

nence a network of small blue veins over her temples.

"Pop, I don't want you to call me a mill dollie!" she cried.

"The next time I find you standing around on the street corner with a bunch of young simps I'll call you worse than that, and on the street, right where I find you, too!"

The girl seemed to swell with the inflation of an uncontrollable anger. Her eyes narrowed to oriental slits, her lips hardened, the tendons of her neck became prominent, as if the sudden advent of age had erased the rounded column of youth from her throat.

"What'll you call me?" she demanded.

His temerity engaged, Weaver hesitated a moment, but the outrage to his moral sense overcame his discretion; it was maddening to be defied by his own daughter. He roared an insulting word and, almost before the reverberation of his obscenity had ceased in the crowded room, Lucy reached the table and flung a plate at his head.

Her aim was ineffectual, and the china disc struck the opposite wall; the broken pieces rained upon the floor like a brief fall of sharp-edged hail. Weaver leapt to his feet, overturning his chair.

"Breaking up things!" he bellowed "I'll show you, Miss!"

He seemed about to rush upon the girl, who did not move, who defied him with her immobility. Then, finding a safer outlet for his passion, he began to seize the dishes from the table and fling them on the floor, plates, saucers, cups, dessert dishes, a brief orgy of devastation that filled the room with a sharp uproar of destructive noise. Motivated in the first instant by the necessity of giving outlet to his enraged sensibilities, he continued, after a second, from the sheer joy of destroying the objects at hand. He was suddenly established as the superior one.

When the smash of breaking dishes made an unexpected inferno in the little room, Mrs. Weaver sat for a moment appalled, her breath arrested, her eyes fixed, as if action were denied her in the face of this calamitous destruction.

Then a passionate anger possessed

her, as if sentient creatures of her own flesh and blood were beaten down before her eyes. She sprang out of her chair, seized her husband's arm and, as he swung around to face her, she struck him wrathfully across the face with her open hand. Her blue eyes were widened discs of cold fire, her lips were compressed to a line like the abrupt stroke of a fine-pointed pencil, her long face was bleached and tense, her tall body, dominating the squat stature of the man before her, was set in every muscle, as if on the point of achieving a supreme and ferocious physical expression.

Weaver met her eyes for an instant and was astonished at the menace in her gaze. His cheek stung and smarted. He began to mutter under his breath. He felt himself confronted with an incalculable danger, the woman before him was strange, he could not discern her purpose.

Then she began to speak and, in the torrent of her abuse, assailing and insulting him, his fears subsided a little and he stooped, picked up the fallen chair, and sat down.

He thought it better to say nothing. He was astonished at her vehemence, did not understand that in his few seconds of destructive violence he had made a thrust at her innermost pride, at her mastering joy of possession, and so the excessive vigour of her abuse disconcerted him as something irrational, a little mad. Out of the corners of his eyes he was vaguely aware of Lucy's departure from the room. He paid no attention, forgot his first concern with her.

He wondered when his wife's voluptuous rage would spend its violence.

Then her voice ceased abruptly and he saw her sink into a chair, clasping her head between her two hands. It seemed to him that she might begin again and, like a small boy stealing out of the presence of a maddened parent, he arose and sidled out of the room. In the hall he expelled a long breath.

"I think she's going a little crazy," he muttered to himself.

It was a contenting thought, for it measurably lifted him from his degrada-

tion, it resigned him to the acceptance of his impotence, as if, in a mood of high philosophy, he had made a truce with a fateful necessity.

Mrs. Weaver, alone in the dining-room, sat in complete immobility, pressing her head tightly betwixt her hands. Stupefying shocks of pain wracked her head as if the blows of an implacable hammer were beating at her brain. Her eyes were blinded with the pain, the hammer blows beat remorselessly at the base of her skull.

She was alarmed. A touch of terror at the extremity of her pain filled her with an apprehension like that of an impending dissolution. The headache had come into her anger like an immense, arresting force, it deprived her of all other concerns, of any emotion. For a long time she sat at the table, her head in her hands.

At last, the pain relenting a trifle, she arose unsteadily and dragged herself out through the hall, up the stairs, and into her bedroom. Here she tied a towel tightly about her head and lay, fearing to move, with her eyes closed and her breath coming quickly. What could bring her relief from these terrible visitations? She would have to arrange an appointment with a doctor. The thought of this expense added to the sum of her distress. Her mood took on the character of an immense depression that degraded all the facts of her life, all her efforts and ambitions.

She thought of her husband, his uselessness and his absurdities, and his violence. He had not even the virtue of being faithful to her; she felt sure that he achieved, from time to time, furtive encounters with other women. Heaven knows what kind of women! It was inconceivable to imagine him in a romantic rôle, or to mentally illustrate the kind of creatures who might respond to his romantic advances.

But she found herself apathetic to his acts, and her thoughts turned, as a fresh source of uneasiness, to her daughter Lucy.

Lucy was indifferent; she lived in an unfathomable world of separate aspira-

tions. Mrs. Weaver pondered a moment upon the character of Lucy's aspirations, but her distressed mind lacked the energy to unravel the enigma. It was pitiful that Lucy was separate and remote—of course, she, too, was romantic. It came to Mrs. Weaver that she knew nothing of the girl's outside life, her friends, the boys she talked with on the corner, other girls in whom she might confide. It was strange to imagine Lucy with a confidante.

Her thoughts turned from her husband and daughter to herself, and in this unrestful moment she could find no satisfaction in her life and no achievement, but only an eternal responsibility. She thought of the payments falling due, and became momentarily frightened with the idea that illness might keep her from her work. It would be dreadful to lose any one of her possessions upon which money was still to be paid; the loss of the least of her things would be strangely calamitous, a symbolic falling off from her purpose, a portent of ultimate failure. This could not happen!

But the necessity of regular payments strangely distressed her now. She recalled her husband's favourite taunt: "a dollar down, a dollar forever." Her mind evolved a droll image of servitude, an eternal slavery to weekly instalments; the instalments became personified, she found them crowding about her bed in grotesque shapes—and her half-waking nightmare passed at last into the oblivion of sleep.

In the front room Mr. Weaver sat sprawled in a chair, turning over the pages of the *Police Gazette*. He puffed on a strong pipe, wreathed his square head with abominable fumes and through this rank fog looked at the prints of cheap actresses with an absorbed eye, regarding their lineaments and proportions like a heathen in the practice of a low, idolatrous worship. From time to time he sighed. Gusts of melancholy blew like chilly winds through his senses. Vague longings possessed him, wantings of the unattainable, dumb regrets that he could not understand.

CHAPTER III

WHEN Mrs. Weaver was nine years old and the coming of Weaver was still one of the unrevealed secrets of her destiny, the seeds of her subsequent mental bias were sown by the calamitous events of that time. She lost her father then, not by death, but by the prison doors closing upon him with a life-sentence for manslaughter.

His loss did not sadden her, but brought, instead, a certain temporary relief into the ways of her life, for when he was drunk he usually beat her, and he was drunk as often as there was money in his pocket. Nevertheless, there were important consequences of his extinguishment in her life, and the growth of her ambition dated from the period of his passing.

She remembered him as a thin, stooping, morose man, never agreeable in his ways, and extraordinarily violent when he was drunk. From his violence resulted his disaster.

They lived on the top floor of an old house in Camac Street, above a grocery store. The odours from the store, conducted by their landlord, arose into their rooms, and the compounded smells of soap, burnt coffee, stale bread, salted pickles, sauerkraut, sprouting potatoes, bolognas and so forth was one of the permanent characteristics of their apartment, as much a part of each room as the dingy wall paper, smoked ceiling and scarred floors.

They had five rooms and four of these were used for themselves; the other was rented to a lodger.

The lodger was ordinarily a variable in the mathematics of their household, inasmuch as most lodgers objected to Mr. Culley in his more vociferously drunken moods. He was quarrelsome then, he quarreled with each successive lodger and the following day, when the old lodger was gone, Mrs. Culley put up a little enamelled sign (by the grace of the grocery keeper) in the grocery window below, bearing the legend, "Room to Let."

Their last lodger was an ex-cavalry-

man, living in his middle age upon a disability pension, but his disability did not prevent him from throwing Culley out of his room on the first occasion when Culley attempted to berate him whilst inflamed with cheap whiskey. Culley went about for several weeks with an expansive bruise over one eye and a sprained wrist that resulted from being sprawled out on his face in the hall.

After that he respected the peace of the new lodger until the final calamity, but whenever the lodger was mentioned his lean face took on an ominous look like the black glance of the heavy tragedian in a melodrama.

On a certain vivid night Culley came home thoroughly drunk, but strangely indifferent to his family. He did not beat his wife and paid no attention to little Sally. He evidenced, instead of his customary habits, an ominous pre-occupation; he sat in the kitchen, breathing loudly, and nursing his secret intentions in silence. Presently they saw him get up and go out into the hall and then he went directly to the ex-cavalryman's room.

Immediately from the room loud voices came out to the kitchen, Culley's harsh, broken tenor, and the hoarse growl of the lodger. Then a physical uproar began, chairs were overturned, some brittle object was broken, a loud curse burst like a bomb in the small apartment, a scream, and the thud of a collapsed body tumbling to the floor. Culley appeared with the ex-cavalryman's saber dangling from his fingers, and the ex-cavalryman was dead in his room.

They tried Culley two months later and since he was mad with drink when the murder was done, they did not hang him, but pronounced the life sentence instead.

Sally never saw him again; a year later he died in prison.

Meanwhile, a fundamental problem confronted her mother and herself. She was then only nine years old, but it was necessary for her to leave school and

take service in the grocer's shop below their rooms, where she was instructed in the weighing out of sugar, bad coffee, dingy crackers and cakes, the wrapping up of parcels, the putting into paper bags. Her mother went out by the day to do housework, they obtained a new lodger, and from these joint sources of income they lived scarcely less well than before.

But already the girl marked a difference in her estate. The first promptings of a deep dissatisfaction whispered in her apprehensions like conspiratorial thoughts. She no longer attended school; the little friendships of the first school years were necessarily abandoned; she saw very little of the girls she had begun to know. At night she was tired, her mother was tired, they lived in an abominable circle of sleep and fatigue.

Within the grocer's shop she could see, by occasional glances through the fly-specked windows, children at play, boys and girls chasing each other through the streets. She could hear the shrill, falsetto screams of the girls, the raucous laughter of the pursuers. Between these and herself she marked a difference. She had never loved the school, but now she felt a vague shame that she could not go to school, for all the others went and then played in the street when school hours were over.

Her sense of shame deepened as her faculties became sharper. Her eyes grew quick to observe the material benefits of others and her own lack of them. The spectacle of a new dress worn by one of the children on the street assailed her with a feeling of shameful inferiority. Even the dresses of adult women, a gaudy hat or a cheap, exuberant fur, aroused longings as indefinite and unappeasable as the first stirrings of romantic ardour.

Gradually she reacted to these emotions with an accumulating determination, a sort of bitter courage, a courage to want things for herself and resolve to have them.

At fourteen she was still working in a grocery store, but a better one now, a

more pretentious place on a better street. Here she no longer tied up parcels and measured out sugar by the pound, but sat behind the gilt bars of a cashier's cage taking in the sales of the store.

She was a tall girl now, thin and pallid, yet not negligible physically, for the masses of her red hair flamed on her head like a banner, and her blue eyes stared out at the world beyond her cage in a cold determination.

In the store her envy and determination were forever stimulated by incessant counter-irritants. Many of the women that came to buy were not enviable, but many on the other hand were arrogantly well-conditioned. Her imagination became active; she pictured the surroundings of their lives, their homes, their jewels, their recreations. When she was free from the prison of the cage she walked through the better streets of the city, looking up at the large houses, endeavoring to penetrate with hard, courageous eyes the interiors behind closed fronts, the furnishings, the carpets, the pictures, the ornamentations and the lives that moved elegantly, like fish in a gorgeous bowl, amongst these graces. The most fabulous picture did not appall her, but strengthened her resolve. A great desire of ownership, and a faith in her ultimate success filled her like an exalted ambition.

Meanwhile, she lived in an isolation that left her without a confidante for her hopes or encouragement for her dreams. She was isolated from her mother by the great separation of opposed habits of mind. Her mother lived from day to day, hopelessly, doing her hard work as she grew older with increasing difficulty, expecting nothing, anxious only that she might not end in the final degradation of charity.

Their intercourse was only the necessary words exchanged between two people that live in the same rooms. Within her heart Sally carried her secrets and these were sufficient; she never paused to wonder about the unrevealed emotions of others; her mother, in particu-

lar, never stirred her curiosity. Was there anything in her mother's heart—dumb regrets that she might responsively make articulate, the hopeless residua of old dreams, unspoken resentments against fortune? Sally never knew. She hurried, in her self-absorption, beyond these things as a passerby on the street sees a thousand faces and remembers none of them.

A year or two later her mother died and then Sally left the old, degraded street and took a single room in a better place, breathing for the first time in her life an air that had not been filtered through the close smells of groceries. Here, a few months after her mother's death she made her first substantial acquisition—a sofa.

It was a curious purchase, a responsibility assumed by accident. She saw it, one day, displayed gorgeously in the window of a credit shop, an inanimate monstrosity of plush and bright veneer, and the terms of its possession were placarded boldly in the shop window.

When she saw its size, its vividness, its overwhelming substantiality assailed her with a great desire, like the wanting of love. A dollar down—a dollar a week! There was nothing to prevent her from having it—this was a marvelous way to ownership, a sort of shrewd cheating of poverty.

It was delivered to her new room, where it crowded her bed and dressing-table, jostled two chairs, and outfaced all the furnishings of the place like an arrogant aristocrat fallen amongst a company of ignoble blood.

About this time Sally discovered in herself an unsuspected talent.

The necessity of making her own clothes gradually developed a certain skill, and one day the woman from whom she rented her room stopped her on the stairway and commented upon the prettiness of one of her dresses.

"I made it myself," she said.

There were exclamations of surprise. She showed her landlady other examples of her work.

"Well," the landlady said, "you could make a whole lot more money than you

do now, I feel pretty sure, by doing dressmaking. You're foolish to go out every day and work for somebody else, when you can work for yourself."

Sally's practical sense grasped the opportunity, but for a time she was a little diffident about its execution. She had already developed a hard sense of values, and although her dreams of possession were florid and expansive, she had at this time a peasant's caution. At the store they paid her seventeen dollars every week, and this was as sure as the tides, whereas the other thing was a gambler's chance, and she moved toward it slowly. Little by little, however, she became established. A year later it was necessary for her to take another room in the house; she found one room too small for sleeping and working.

About this time she met Weaver.

CHAPTER IV

THEY met informally; he spoke to her on the street.

It was almost her first amorous adventure, for she had not been attractive to men, chiefly because she had not bent her mind to the technical tricks of captivating them. It was one Sunday afternoon when she met Weaver. She approached him on the street and met his eye absently and perhaps he mistook her absent stare for an inviting glance, for he smiled at her and lifted his hat.

In a moment he was at her side, talking to her.

She was too devoid of sex-consciousness to repel him. She answered him, she maintained a little current of monosyllables in their talk and meanwhile she was inwardly astonished to find herself growing self-conscious. Her self-consciousness made her aware of Weaver's sex, and made her observant of his masculinity, of the qualities that characterized his features, the quality of his voice, the assertiveness of his smile, the length of his stride in walking. She became less and less able to talk to him, and with the increase of her shyness Weaver found her charming. An illu-

sory veil began to dim and favourably distort his optical image of her. He discovered an allure in the contrasting pallor of her cheeks and the florid exuberance of her hair; her slenderness was translated into grace and because she was diffident he esteemed her.

This was their first meeting—a walk on the street, an almost wordless parting at the door. The girl went indoors to sit in her room in a soft glamour of unaccustomed romance, as vague as the melancholy of the twilight. She scarcely thought of Weaver as an individual; he was revealed to her senses as a primitive force, a new aspect of life, an opposed type. Her emotions did not rise to a wave of ardour, but maintained a smooth placidity, coloured, stirring under the surface, like a body of water in a quiet place, half impenetrable to the eye and taking up slightly distorted shadows of the grass and trees on its margins.

Near her, in the room, was the great plush sofa, almost her own now, and thrown across its gaudy velvet was a half-finished evening gown, cut out of cheap materials. Her mind was almost wholly divorced from the material considerations that normally associated themselves with these objects; perhaps for the first time in many years she indulged a mood completely foreign to her customary moods.

She met Weaver again and soon they were friends. Quickly, into her emotional response to him, came the solid figures of her practical sense. She accepted a certain possibility as she accepted the other facts of life—perhaps he would want to marry her. She began to estimate marriage, sum it up, total it, subject it to a process of mathematics. Her arithmetic was, no doubt, coloured somewhat with illusion, as the surface of a hard, steel blade reflects the mysterious lights of distant stars, but a firm practicality lay beneath, like the unyielding metal beneath the reflection. She saw marriage as a step forward, as a new solidity, as an assurance.

They used to sit together, the lovers,

talking about their small concerns. Now the girl was the loquacious one, making plans, speaking of the material possibilities of the future. Weaver faced her, a heavy jawed, flat faced young man, with thick black hair and eyes as round as black marbles, but she scarcely scrutinized his face, taking in with his image upon her eyes only a faint flavour of his masculinity.

He watched her talk, stared at her, his eyes wandered over her ruddy hair and pale face, her slender neck and shoulders, her long arms and thin hands. Inwardly he was stirred with a heavy, persistent urge, an unsatisfied longing, like the ache of a remote hurt. Inarticulately he desired her, and each of her qualities appealed to his unspoken desire, her red hair and white face, her thin hands and long arms. He began to want her dumbly for his own as a dog wants a master. His unpoetic mind stirred with the difficult gestation of poetic thoughts that never became viable in words. When he was apart from her he looked as long as he dared at every woman on the streets and wanted his own woman. The ephemeral adventures that fell in his way did not content him.

Finally they were married and for a time Weaver's dumb desires spent themselves upon his unresponsive wife. He came home to her in these days with some gladness, but little by little he felt a lack, as inarticulate a lack as his inarticulate longings. She began to irritate him. She was too self-sufficient. She was too able. His slack mind resented her practical superiority. He soon perceived the only vulnerable link in her armour. She bought things, she bought anything, she was madly acquisitive. He responded to his discovery with a gradually augmented derision.

"Yes, a dollar a week," he would growl—"and then a dollar forever!"

CHAPTER V

FROM sheer physical fear and foreboding Mrs. Weaver yielded to necessity and consulted a doctor. Her last headache had been overwhelming, it left her physically devastated, as if she had

been half drowned in the sea. For several days she could not work, and weighing this loss against the cost of medical consultation she chose the latter.

The doctor lived on a small street and essayed the cure of everything. He officiated at births, and crossed the hands over the breasts of the aged in their terminal pneumonias; he treated colds and minor bruises, and also the graver distempers of the flesh. Into this business he brought, like a poet, a certain air, a gravity of demeanour, a solemn scientific deportment that deified his ministrations and aided the sick by faith in his mysterious powers.

Mrs. Weaver waited for him in a small reception room ornamented with several framed diplomas and a large bookcase full of impressive, leather-bound volumes.

The folding doors barring ingress to the inner office opened, and Dr. Berger looked out into the waiting-room. He nodded to Mrs. Weaver, who arose and followed him into the consulting room; the folding doors were closed again.

"Doctor," she said, "I came to see you about my colds and my headaches. I hope you can do something for them, because lately I've been so sick I've hardly been able to do any work at all."

Dr. Berger looked at his patient in his usual manner, which was a way of deep penetration, as if the opacity of the flesh were made transparent to him and through a glass-like integument he could contemplate the mysterious inner manoeuvres of the gall bladder, spleen, liver and other concealed organs. His round, black eyes had learned the trick of a hard glance, his mouth the habit of compression, and supporting these devices was a conventional effective black beard, trimmed to a point.

This afternoon Dr. Berger, having no other patients waiting, resolved to interest himself in the case before him, a yielding to an old scientific interest that had not yet evaporated in the sterile air of life as a general practitioner. He did not, therefore, reach at once for the prescription pad at his hand, but began to question Mrs. Weaver.

She explained that her colds had begun several years before. They came without reason; drafts seemed to have nothing to do with their appearance. The headaches had followed six or eight months later.

"Nowadays," she explained, "there are times when I can hardly breathe. I've sometimes wondered if it were asthma."

"About your headaches?"

"They used to come on the right side of my head, but now the whole front of my head seems almost to burst; it's just as if something was pressing to get out inside of my skull. My eyes throb and pain horribly; I can't bear to touch them."

The doctor arose and removed a nasal speculum from his instrument cabinet. He fitted on a head mirror and examined the interior of his patient's nasal cavities with the speculum. It had been some time since the opportunity to indulge a little scientific curiosity had made this procedure necessary. Consequently, he was not entirely sure that his observation was accurate. Nevertheless, he believed that he saw a localized redness, with edema, about the anterior end of the middle turbinate, whilst there was a suggestion of a mucopurulent discharge in the region of the infundibulum. He removed the speculum and questioned Mrs. Weaver further.

His use of the instrument had already impressed her, and her interest was aroused, and she confessed the minutæ of her illnesses, even digressing to the obstetrics of Lucy's delivery, like one who indulges unrestrained a wanting to gossip. She said that once or twice after her worst attacks of headache she had noticed a dimness of vision for a day or two. Dr. Berger's face lighted as by the illumination of discovery, and he nodded several times.

"Ha!" he exclaimed softly. "Choked disc!"

"What did you say, Doctor?"

"It doesn't matter. Never mind. But listen carefully to what I tell you. Communicating with our nasal passages there

are a number of hollow passages filled with air. They are called sinuses. You are suffering from a chronic inflammation of these sinuses called sinusitis. One of your early colds brought on the condition and it has continued and grown worse. One of these sinuses is in the back of your head, at the base of the brain. This is the hardest one to get at and treat, and your headaches indicate that it is involved, particularly the severe pain in your eyes. There is just a little plate of bone that separates this sinus from the nerve of your eye, and when matter collects in this sinus it presses on the nerve; that's why you have found your sight bad after your worst attacks. The danger is that this pressure will become so great at one time or another as to permanently injure the nerve; your sight might suffer very seriously then. You must be treated. I'll give you some medicine now, but it won't do, because you may feel better, not to pay any attention to the danger you run. I want you to come regularly for treatment."

He paused and took up his pen, inscribing one of his stock prescriptions on a blank of the prescription pad. A touch of enthusiasm enlivened him like a draft of wine. He seldom found time to indulge his old scientific leanings, or to dredge up from the subconscious, facts learned at a more aspiring time—the exact information just imparted to his patient. He wrote the prescription mechanically, however, from long practice.

He gave it to Mrs. Weaver and set a time for her return. Bowing her out through the folding doors he returned to his chair and ruminated for several moments. Medicine, after all, would be an interesting thing if one only had the opportunity to practice it. But how could you take the time to practice medicine at a dollar an office call?

Turned aside for a moment from this practical difficulty, he arose and went to his bookcase. He was wondering what a specialist would do with such a condition as he believed existed in the woman who had just left his office. He

took down a book and looked up the question of chronic empyema of the sphenoidal sinus. The thing to do was open and drain. To accomplish that, you had to remove the middle turbinate entire, turn your forcep blades at the proper angles, enter through the ostium, and turn downward, cutting away the anterior wall.

Dr. Berger sighed; the anatomy confused him. He could not do that. For an instant he envied the specialist who accomplished such interesting surgery. In this case, the woman should go to see a specialist, but probably she would not consent to pay a specialist's fees, no good would be done to her by suggesting it, and he would lose a patient. Again, no doubt, giving up the idea of surgery, he could discover a good prescription to help her. There must be some virtue in drugs. He shrugged his shoulders. After all, were the specialists able to do much more than himself?

On the street Mrs. Weaver walked away somewhat dismayed. The doctor had frightened her. Holding his prescription in her hand, she began to doubt his truthfulness. He wanted her to come back regularly for treatment. That meant, in the end, a tremendous bill in doctor's fees and medicines. Probably he had tried to frighten her in order to make her come back. She half resolved to trust to the old headache powders and not go back again.

Just as she turned into her own street she met Lucy, who greeted her joyfully and took her arm with a strange excess of exuberant affection.

The girl's eyes were bright with enthusiasm, her slantwise eyebrows were lifted at an acute angle, her slender body seemed poised on invisible wings and she moved at her mother's side in an effortless swing of her long legs.

"Wait till I tell you!" she cried. "I've the dandiest chance!"

CHAPTER VI

It was necessary for the girl to confide in someone, and even her mother, in whom she seldom confided anything,

would suffice for the moment. So she detained her mother in the hall and said:

"After we got out of school this afternoon Mary Coolidge took me to her cousin's house and there were a couple of fellas there calling on Mary's cousin. One of them was all dolled up in white flannels, and wore a big solitaire ring and another diamond in his stick-pin—Mom, they must have cost a couple of thousand dollars! I said to myself, 'Gee, Mary's cousin is going around in a lot of swell company; here's Mr. Vandergould with us this afternoon!'"

The girl giggled a little at her own witticism, and Mrs. Weaver, in some abstraction, wondered vaguely what she had to impart. Whilst Lucy indulged her giggles, the older woman was distressed by a sudden realization that the hatrack was very old and shabby, and she began to calculate when she could afford to acquire a new one, one of the gorgeous variety in mahogany veneer, with projecting antlers on which to hang hats and coats, instead of metal pegs.

"That hatrack needs dusting," she murmured.

"But he wasn't a bit stuck-up and in a few minutes we was talking together like old friends. I guess Mary's cousin thought it was funny that I should get into a real private conversation with one of the fellas that came to call on her, but when I found out that his father was a movie producer I didn't have a chance to worry about Mary's cousin!"

For an instant an eruptive exuberance, like the explosion of an internal bomb, possessed the girl. She concluded her announcement by whirling a complete circle on her heels, snapping the fingers of both hands, and winking her eyes rapidly two or three times at her mother. The impassive hatrack stood as before, but thoughts of its insufficiency temporarily departed from Mrs. Weaver's mind and she looked at Lucy with a surprised perplexity.

"I asked him flat what he thought my chances were in the movies. I said: 'Am I the type or am I too skinny? Don't be afraid to tell me the truth.' 'You skinny,' he said, and he laughed.

'Did you ever see a fat woman that made a good vamp? It's just the snaky type that we're on the lookout for. I may be wrong, but you've got the kind of face that screens good, too.' Honest, Mom, he was the most interesting fella I ever talked to in my life. Even if he'd said I had no chance in the movies at all, I'd have been glad to learn some of the things he told me. He's seen all the stars, seen 'em screened, knows all about the inside of the movie game. He said: 'The biggest thing of all is temperament. Of course, your face has got to screen right, and a girl with a figure like an ironing-board can't expect to get into the pictures, but making allowances, most any girl with temperment has got a good chance.' He says some of the stars have been taught all the temperment they have, learned it like you learn a lesson out of a book. 'A girl like you,' he said, 'with natural temperment has a big advantage.'"

Lucy waited for her mother to say something, but Mrs. Weaver found nothing appropriate to say. She was indeed a little embarrassed by her daughter's exuberant confidence and the exuberance itself puzzled her, as an animal is puzzled by the inscrutable manœuvres of a human being. She had never come into any sympathetic relation with Lucy, she was indifferent to the girl's ambitions in the same degree that Lucy was indifferent to those of her mother.

For a moment she stood in silence, regarding the girl with a slight frown.

In the parlour the ornate clock with the marble columns struck five times, and as if stirred from a lethargy, Mrs. Weaver made a gesture of impatience and pushed past Lucy, walking hurriedly toward the dining-room door.

"Tell me the rest another time, Lucy," she said. "I had no idea it was so late. I've scarcely time to get your father's supper!"

A sharp annoyance touched Lucy's face for a moment; half turning she watched her mother disappear with a frown contracting downward the acutely slantwise strokes of her heavy eye-

brows. The exuberance of her mood, however, prevailed in a moment over the feeble protestations of her indignation.

Like a dancer executing a grotesque figure in private practice, she whirled again on her heels, grimaced at the walls of the bleak hallway, and swinging her arms about like wheels rotating upon an eccentric pivot, she bounded up the stairs and dashed into her room, where she made faces into her mirror, imitating the luscious smiles of a sweet cinema heroine and the dark flowerings of a foiled vampire. Her mother's indifference was forgotten. She had entered, like a spirit, into another world.

In the kitchen Mrs. Weaver confronted the daily problem of supper. During these hours of preparing food her mind was never given up wholly to the immediate business of cooking. Extraneities, strange interlopers in the smells of frying grease and boiling vegetables, always entered in, speculations on future possessions, complex mathematics elucidating the problems of future credits. This afternoon her thoughts were more than ordinarily mixed and complex.

She watched the steak as it fried, and wondered, meanwhile, whether the losses of her recent illness could be retrieved in time to meet several large instalment payments soon coming due. She remembered that the doctor had insisted upon her return for treatment, and now she determined that to go back for regular treatments was out of the question; she could not afford the money it would cost. But even as she determined this she was conscious that a dull pain remained in her head, her eyes felt weak and strained; soon another attack would come upon her like a witchery, like the evil consequence of a malediction.

Her mind reverted to the time when she was free of this abomination, wholly well, able to work day and night. Obscure recollections of her younger days replaced the memories of a nearer time.

A confused company of memories passed like a pageant of shadows

through her mind, a host of discontinuous recollections, glimpses of the old street and her mother, the store, the cashier's cage, the first money earned by making a dress, the plush sofa that had since disintegrated, losing its sawdust in the end like a slow process of bleeding to death, interviews with credit managers, collectors dunning her for back instalments in times when money was short, a surprising memory of Weaver kissing her for the first time and a momentary wonder that they had ever kissed, Weaver's face as a young man, unpleasant incidents from the quarrels.

Over this heterogeny of recollections a certain mood gradually asserted itself, like a single colour tincturing all the chromatic variety of her memories, a mood of depression and foreboding, a sense of impending harm, as if something prophetic had spoken in her, in indistinguishable words, leaving only the conviction that a warning had been said.

"I wonder is my headache coming back?" she thought.

The clock struck again, and a few minutes later she heard Weaver coming in through the front door. He did not slam it. This neglect of an accustomed act gave her a second of surprise.

Weaver appeared in the kitchen and his wife was aware of him standing just inside the door. He said nothing. He did not inquire when supper would be ready.

Mrs. Weaver was busied for several minutes administering the last crude culinary rites to the frying steak and the boiling potatoes. Finally she looked up with some sharpness and questioned her husband.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

He scowled, his beady eyes glittered angrily.

"What do you mean, what's the matter? Nothing!"

She began to take up the supper.

"Lucy is upstairs in her room, I think," she said. "Call her, will you?"

The man blundered out of the room and bellowed Lucy's name up the stairs like a jailer of the commune calling a

name for the guillotine. There was a remote, answering scream.

Weaver went into the dining-room. His wife appeared, bringing in the steak, and observed him staring down at the tablecloth. He did not look up at her. Lucy appeared and they seated themselves at the table. The man ate in silence.

Plainly, Mrs. Weaver perceived, there was something the matter with him.

His difficulty was revealed later in the evening, whilst he and his wife were alone together. Lucy had gone out and curiously enough her father did not question her as to her intent for the evening, nor did he interpose any objections to her absence.

As soon as the dishes were washed Mrs. Weaver went to her workroom and here she was busy running a hem on a half-completed dress. She heard Weaver coming upstairs and smelt his pipe; its distant, acrid vapour entered into her room like an evil spirit. He went to the sitting-room, opened a window and for a time she heard a rocking chair creaking and the faint rustling of a newspaper being turned from page to page.

Then he came through the hall, stopping at the door of her workroom. She did not look around; she bent intently over her work.

"You asked me downstairs what was the matter," he said. "Well, the matter is that several hundred of us were laid off today and I'm one of them."

Mrs. Weaver's feet ceased to pedal at the machine, her fingers relaxed their forward push upon the fabric beneath them; she turned hastily and stared up at him.

"Out of a job!" she exclaimed.

Her words aroused him to a fury as if their simplicity were the concealing cloak for an obscene taunt. He clenched his fists, he narrowed his eyes, his square face was flushed to an apoplectic crimson.

"Of course I'm out of a job!" he belated. "Can't you understand plain English? Laid off! Out of work! You're so damned capable of making money and buying every confounded

gimcrack thing under the heavens—let's see you make enough to keep things running until I get another job!"

His familiar taunts, sufficient at ordinary moments to arouse her scornful response, were now ignored in the swift presentation of difficulties to be faced at once. It was not the first time that Weaver had been out of work, but he had never lost his job at a more unfavourable moment. Her illness had deprived her of a considerable income, she was already behind with several payments—would she, at last, suffer the humiliation of seeing some of her possessions returned to the store? This thought was unendurable, and in order to extinguish it, she assumed a more optimistic mind. Perhaps Weaver would find another place quickly. He had secured work at other times when work had been harder to find.

Her optimistic hope did not, however, reveal itself in her face. Her limp, curly hair seemed to lose what was left of its lustre and all that remained of its vitality; it hung about her ears like the dead strands of a badly-conditioned wig. Her blue eyes were fixed on Weaver's face. Her own long face drew itself out surprisingly, a drooping line from the sharp cheekbones to the pointed chin.

Weaver waited for her to speak, but when she said nothing he snorted in contempt.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed. "You make me sick, Sally. You give me a pain. You look like a drowned cat!"

He waited another moment to see if she would respond, and then he stamped off through the hall, returning to the sitting-room. The catastrophic expression upon his wife's face seemed to have invigorated him, and now he paced up and down the room with more assurance in his step. His mind achieved a cynical sympathy with the woman's, for he was able to imagine the cause of her profound concern, he caught a flashing sense of her pride of possession, her secret pride in the accumulations she had made, and her fear when any material event threatened her ownership. It pleased him to imagine her perturba-

tion; this gave him a feeling of inward justification, a feeling of self-assertion, an indirect sense of his own superiority. After all, he was not negligible and in such a time as this his wife was forced to a less depreciatory measure of his importance.

His self-importance expanded. He returned through the hall and stood in the door of the workroom again.

"Where's Lucy tonight?" he demanded.

Mrs. Weaver did not answer.

"I suppose you don't care. A little matter like the whereabouts of your own daughter doesn't worry you. She can go to the dogs so long as you can figure out a way to pay for a new rug or some infernal picture. Well, I'll worry about her! Now that I'm going to be around the house for a week or two, I'll take her in hand, knock a little of the blasted nonsense out of her and a little sense in! You let her run as wild as a tom-cat. She's not much better than a mill dollie. What's this business about the moving pictures? I'll give her enough moving pictures right in this house to keep her mind off of any others. I'll—"

Through the woman's ears his tirade passed unheard as if she were not sensitive to the wave-lengths of his utterance. A kind of stuporous languor possessed her senses, like the action of a sedative drug dulling her nervous perceptions. She felt weary, enervated, immensely fatigued. All the problems of her life, the past as well as the present, seemed to press down upon her like a palpable mass, numbing her senses. Weaver, with his trivial fierceness, his authoritative pose, was inconsiderable, as remote as a shadow. She was scarcely aware when he disappeared from the door and the sound of his berating voice no longer agitated the air of her room.

Then her depressive weariness passed and a more fundamental quality asserted itself, the quality of her determination, her courage. She remembered the squalor of her old home, the smells of the little street and the special odours of the little rooms and she perceived that indeed she had come a long way, scaled

an appreciable height, in the transition from that time to this. No one had aided her. She had made, against discouragement, a place for herself in the world, and was laying up a security. She thought of Weaver's taunt, and it embittered her to find him so blind to the measure of her effort and her achievement.

With a new determination, under the stress of a new necessity, she bent over the sewing machine again, feeding the fabric lengthwise into the rapid mechanical thrust and withdrawal of the needle. Her head ached a little. She did not notice it.

CHAPTER VII

SEVERAL factors conspired against Weaver's attempt to find employment. The times were bad, and it took a large degree of energy and watchfulness for a half-skilled man to pluck a job when so many hands were reaching for it. His own mental state was opposed to the necessary persistence demanded of a successful quest.

He watched the advertisements of the newspapers, and called at divers factories, but he always came too late. Sometimes there were a score of men waiting before him, and at other times he did not even arrive in time for this chance—applicants had been and gone and the job was filled.

His lethargy in the search was the product of several things. He felt no urgency to work, since his wife was working. All day and half the night you could hear the metallic clamour of her sewing machine like a steel beast singing an endless raucous song. She had plenty of work; she was pressed with more work than she could accomplish.

Again, he enjoyed his little space of freedom. It gave him hours of expansion, hours in which to develop the dumb, obscure longings that frequently misted his senses like a whisper breathed upon a mirror. There was an unfulfillment in his life, a wanting he could not express. He had vague recollections of

his younger days when little dreams of the future, half articulate hopes of ardour, used to startle his lethargic emotions like signal lights from an unperceived shore.

Sometimes he would walk into the workroom and watch his wife as she cut out a dress or hemmed up a seam. Her gaunt face and her straggling hair depressed him and at the same time angered him. He would go back to his room and take up old copies of the motion picture magazines and the *Police Gazette* and stare earnestly at the numberless portraits of women displayed in these journals. Then a dull, flushing desire assailed him, a wanting that was sensual but not wholly of the senses.

He used to walk the streets and watch at the faces of women as they passed; he watched after them as they walked away and their figures diminished in the perspective of the street. The streets were populous, like a crowded heaven, with women, and all of them were more desirable than Sally.

When he could borrow the money he visited the burlesque shows. The sou-brettes and the girls in the chorus were individually pleasing and he remembered the time, before his marriage, when he used to wait at the stage door of the theatre to take a chorus girl to a late supper. It amazed him to observe the lost romance of his life; it astonished him to find that once he had known a stage girl, and talked to her over the intimacy of a supper table.

A dull mental revolt, like the reachings for freedom in a peasant's mind, made the prospect of going back to work, resuming the old routine, unbearable. He desired some immense adventure. His stodgy mind could not delineate it. He wanted enough money to disappear for a month, for a year, enough money to dine in gay places again, with a girl, highballs, and a dozen bottles of beer. . .

He walked the streets at night wondering what would happen if he should speak to a woman. His thick figure, the strands of his black hair protruding from beneath his hat, his round, jetty

eyes, his compressed mouth proclaimed an immense earnestness.

Meanwhile, within the house, he found the leisure to assert himself. Sally was too busy to give him any satisfaction but Lucy was a ready victim and he bedevilled her without mercy. He questioned all her acts, he argued with her over the hour she should return from school, he endeavoured to block her excursions in the evening. Only his own propensity for wandering out at night saved her from the immolation of a prison house. The altercations of these two became colossal, like the epic quarrels of olympians. They exhausted the resources of invective, they rained personalities upon each other like showers of aerial darts and only the fear in their hearts of Mrs. Weaver's anger diverted them from breaking the chairs and throwing about the vases in the uttermost hearts of their encounters.

Lucy became incredibly secretive. Only an accident led to the discovery that she was still meeting the son of the moving picture producer—the young man who admired her temperament. In a forgetful moment he drove up to the door of the house in his runabout instead of waiting for Lucy around the corner, and Weaver, reading the *Gazette* in the front window, saw him below, and heard him sounding his horn as a signal to Lucy.

Weaver dropped the magazine and hurried out into the hall. He was in time to intercept Lucy as she emerged from her room, wearing a gaudy hat and a flowered dress, tiptoeing toward the stairs.

"Where are you going?" he thundered.

She drew herself up; her slender body straightened like a taut cord, her slanting eyebrows lifted themselves into a supercilious curve, and with an exaggerated shrug of shoulders she attempted to push past her father and reach the stairs.

"Eh!"

He grasped her shoulder and swung her around and as she faced him her pale face crimsoned as if an inner flame

of supreme anger were made visible upon her cheeks.

"Let go of me, Pop!" she demanded.

"You're not going out with any young simp tonight!" Weaver declared. "What's that feller coming here in his car for you for? I don't like the looks of that feller. I know his kind!"

"I'm going where I please!"

"You're going back to your room or in to help your mother!"

"Let go of me!"

"I'm going to tell you something, Lucy. You're not going out tonight and the next time that young simp comes around here in his flivver—"

"Flivver!"

The girl uttered a wildly derisive laugh.

"—I'm going out and punch his nose. I'll whale him so he won't come around here trying his tricks on my daughter again. Movies! You've got as much chance of acting in the movies as you have of taking a beauty prize. Go in and help your mother with her work!"

Lucy glared at him; her eyes narrowed, she leaned forward to emphasize her words.

"Work! I don't see you doing no work! You've got plenty of time to mess around in other people's business, but I don't see you getting a job. Help Mom! Help her yourself! Go get a job!"

Her indictment enraged him and without hesitation he swung his open hand and struck her squarely on the cheek. The force of the blow drove her against the wall. She staggered a moment to retain her feet and then, with a scream, ran back into her room.

Later Weaver went out. When he returned he looked into Lucy's room. She was not at home. He awakened his wife. They searched the house and did not find her.

The following day a note came from her saying that she had left home to be married.

"When you see me again," she said, "it will be in the movies. Jim will get me into the pictures before the end of a month."

CHAPTER VIII

IN the beginning it was a strange thing to Mrs. Weaver to realize that Lucy was gone, romantically married to the son of the motion picture producer. She realized then how remote her thoughts had been from the people around her, her husband and Lucy, especially the girl. She tried to imagine her daughter's new life, but could only achieve an adumbration of the possible reality, for she had never been in emotional sympathy with Lucy, and could not foresee her life by divination from the qualities of the girl's romantic heart. But she was curious, she wished that Lucy would write, yet no letter came; there was no word, save the first brief note.

For the first few days she felt the difference of her daughter's absence, missed her comings and goings, remembered some of her chattering conversation, her opinions on young men, her expectations of love, her aspirations for the screen, and missed these also. The house was a little lonely, and in the consciousness of this loneliness she wondered occasionally about herself, tried to see into her own life, divine the outcome of her days.

But she was too deep in the groove of a certain way of living to pause long and contemplate with a critical sense her present and her future. When she looked into the mirror it never occurred to her that her face was changed, that the youthfulness had gone out of it. When she sewed in her workroom she seldom questioned the necessity of her labour or thought that the work was endless and too hard. She quarreled with Weaver and found it natural to quarrel with him; it was their habit.

There was, of course, a new quality in their quarreling now, for Weaver was still out of work and showed less and less effort to find work again. A hard, practical calculation asserted itself in her attitude toward him. He did not want to find work, so she was virtually supporting him. He was a loss, an expense, a waste. It could not go on with-

out-end. Every day she urged him, with an increasing sharpness, to try to discover a job.

Meanwhile, Weaver drifted like a vessel with a helmsman lost in abstracted meditation. He found it impossible to take up the old course of life again. A strange uncertainty possessed him, the dull sense of permanency was gone from his outlook. When he looked at his wife he observed her as a stranger. There was no bond save an old habit that tied him to her, and now he questioned the habit, wondered why he was in the same house with her.

He underwent a disintegration of his old acceptances, like a solid wall that falls to earth after years of changeless fixity. His obtuse sensualities filled him with yearnings; he wanted a new life for the moment and thought of nothing for the future.

Meanwhile, with Lucy gone, alone with his wife, he found himself at a disadvantage in the quarrels. He was vaguely afraid of his wife; there was a point beyond which he did not dare to go in his encounters with her. He recognized, without a verbal admission, her superior courage, the superior toughness of her moral fibre.

With Lucy at home he had been able to keep his self-respect by regulating the girl's acts, by a dictatorial pressure upon her habits and desires, and through this show of authority he had created the self-deceiving fiction of his masculine domination. Alone with his wife, he was plainly enacting a subordinate rôle.

He began to avoid her and in avoiding her he began to wonder about her and find her a strange, incalculable woman. What was the urge that drove her to her ceaseless industry? What were her delights? Why did she assume a thousand debts in order to possess herself of objects without appeal to his mind? He resented her possessions. Everything in the house was her own. It tormented him to imagine the immense debauch he might enjoy if the money expended on a tenth of her things could be realized and put into his own pocket.

In the beginning he had been able to borrow small sums from her, but now she became close, she refused his requests for small advances, she uttered, like a malign parrot, an unchanging phrase: "Don't ask me for money. Don't forget that I'm keeping up this whole house now and I've got plenty of obligations to meet. Why don't you get a job?"

One evening, loafing outside the stage door of a burlesque house, he caught the eye of one of the chorus girls as she emerged and she grinned at him; he was about to follow her but the sudden ignominious knowledge that he had not even a dollar in his pocket gave him pause. The chorus girl hesitated on the street and then walked on—Weaver watched her go with a dull flame burning and aching within him. You called her a girl by convention, for divested of her footlights habit she was not girlish and her face was set into immobile contours, but for Weaver her face was glamorous and her heavy figure expressed a voluptuous allure.

The next day, tortured by the vision of the old chorus girl, Weaver achieved an abandon of audacity, and going into the workroom he said to his wife:

"Sally, I want you to lend me twenty-five dollars."

She turned and faced him; she stared up at his face, a watery wonder in her blue eyes. He met her stare uneasily, but did not drop his eyes.

"Twenty-five dollars! Good God!"

Weaver was suddenly enraged. He reacted like a child to the refusal of a toy or a sweet thing. His face became inflamed, his round, black eyes glowed with a fierce indignation, his thick figure became taut and set.

"Yes, twenty-five, I said! Never heard of such a sum, is that it? Well then, I'm the boss around here and I want twenty-five dollars; get that straight! You'd spend a hundred dollars for a confounded rocking chair, or any other kind of damned dewdard, and I'm rotten tired of it all. It's none of your blasted business what I want with

the money either. I want it; that's all you need to know."

Mrs. Weaver dropped the piece of sewing in her hands and arose. Her thin lips were contracted, her thin face was drawn out into a long severity. She faced Weaver, a head taller than his squat figure, and her emaciated body trembled with a potent moral wrath.

"Weaver," she commanded, "get out of this room! Never try to bully me again!"

For several seconds he did not stir; he continued to meet her eyes as if, by enduring her stare, he could achieve a mesmeric mastery of her will. He thought of rushing at her, seizing her, beating her, destroying her strength by his physical superiority. But something restrained him from this encounter, a profound inner doubt of his success. He began to mutter incoherently. He turned and shuffled out through the open door.

Presently Mrs. Weaver heard him leave the house.

He did not return for supper. Later in the evening, after she had resumed her work, she heard him come in. He did not come upstairs. She heard him blundering about below, made no investigation of his manoeuvres. One of her headaches had returned. She was trying, in spite of the throbbing pain in her eyes, to complete the final embroideries of an evening gown. Doubtless Weaver was looking about for something to eat.

Meanwhile Weaver, however, was engaged in a curious business, unconnected with the search for food. He had taken all the silverware from the dining-room buffet. To this he added several silver ornaments from the parlour—everything with the mark *Sterling* on the bottom. These he made into a crude, heavy bundle. Then, hurrying through the hall, the heavy bundle under his arm, he reached the front door, and in her room above Mrs. Weaver heard him slam the door as he went out.

She discovered her loss in the morning and by the end of the week she faced the astonishing fact that Weaver had gone permanently.

CHAPTER IX

SHE was alone in the house, she was ill and scarcely able to work. Her obligations crowded upon her like inexorable fates demanding, drop by drop, the blood of her life, and something had gone out of her assurance, an axiomatic assumption had passed, that left her like the passing of reality.

Again and again she wandered through the house, looked into the crowded rooms, walked over the expensive and hideous rugs, moved about the ornate chairs, stared at the grotesque pictures and vases and ornaments, and wondered what force, for days and months and years had compelled her to acquire these things, adding them one by one, like a laborious ant-like insect accumulating a fabulous hoard.

A sense of great futility assailed her and enervated her ambition.

She walked through the rooms of the house, a towel tied about her head to ease the chronic, throbbing pain, a gaunt figure in the silent rooms, like a spectre mocked by material things. Looking back upon her early years, and her first home, her accomplishment, the steps from the little rooms over the grocery store to this house of her own crowded with furnishings, it all seemed negligible. She was lost in nebulous uncertainties, like an immaterial spirit suddenly liberated from a grossly material body.

She thought of Weaver, wondered where he had gone, missed the long habit of their altercations, questioned her conduct toward him, mused upon the problem of their separation.

There was something in Weaver she had not understood, nor ever tried to fathom; she had always taken him for granted. It surprised her now to perceive that she had lived with the man so long, through so many months and years, accepting him like the commonest habit of life, and discovering him inscrutable in the end. But even her own heart was inscrutable now.

Her illness did not pass; she seemed to move in a permanent cycle of pain.

She was still able to keep her feet, do a little work, but she knew the work she was able to do was inadequate to meet her crowding obligations. What would happen? She was too indifferent to imagine.

One afternoon, sitting in her room upstairs, she heard the front door open and for an instant it did not seem strange that someone had come in; she forgot that she was alone. Then, startled, she arose and walked to the door.

"Who is there?" she called.

"Mother!"

It was Lucy's voice.

She ran to the stairs: Lucy was standing below, down in the hall, looking up at her. There was a curious hesitancy in the girl's pose. With an immense gladness at the discovery of someone of her own, her own child, the woman called her name in an hysterical cry. Lucy ran up the stairs and without a word Mrs. Weaver took her in her arms.

Lucy clung to her mother and in amazement the older woman found that the girl was sobbing, and while it was strange to find her sob and cling, there was an ineffable sweetness in this close embrace, a new delight, a lifting in the dullness of her heavy heart, never known before. She could not remember a time when Lucy had sobbed in her arms and yet it was natural and sweet to hold her there now in the intimacy of a fond embrace.

"Dear girl, dear girl," whispered Mrs. Weaver. "Why did you leave me alone so long? I didn't oppose your marriage, dear. Now you've come back to me, and I never knew how much I wanted you before. We'll be friends, Lucy dear, and you'll be able to tell me everything and let me have some share in your life. You'll come back to me often dear—oh, I wish you could come here to live!"

Lucy sobbed anew and brokenly, blended with her crying, she said:

"I've come back to live here, mother—if you'll let me. . . ."

They were walking close together through the hall, and as the girl said this

they had just reached the familiar work-room, and the mother, turning to her child in surprise, questioned her.

"But where is your husband?"

"I don't know. I never want to see him again—"

She dropped into a chair, she covered her face with her hands, and in a strange abandon of grief she fell into an hysteria of tears. The mother embraced her shoulders, pressed the girl's head against her breast, caressed her cheeks and hair. An immense pity and tenderness filled her heart, a new unaccustomed emotion that thrilled her with his sweetness.

"Poor dear," she said, "tell me your troubles."

"You'll never forgive me. You can't."

"There's nothing to forgive. You had your own life to live."

"You don't understand, mother . . ."

"What is it, dear Lucy?"

"Oh, mama! I went with him—but I never married him. . . ."

For a moment the older woman was astonished, and her long abstraction from the emotions of life made her sympathy slow to embrace the fact, but the strange, unaccustomed joy of this reunion prevailed again; once more, caressingly, she pressed Lucy close to her breast. Still the girl sobbed. A secret, profound grief shook her like the visible expression of an inward, irreparable hurt.

"What can I do?" she sobbed.

"What can you do *dear*?"

The girl raised her face, her arched brows were curved with grief, her face was stained with tears, her lips were tight as she spoke.

"Mother," she said, "I'm going to have . . . a baby. . . ."

CHAPTER X

THEY spent the evening together, talking of how they would live now, and to Mrs. Weaver a measure of her old courage returned. Again it seemed useful to go on, there was a purpose in working; Lucy would work with her; there was another future to provide. She

would teach Lucy to sew, and very soon, they assured each other, they would both be happy again.

But as she talked to the girl the older woman found herself abstracted from time to time, touched with a puzzled curiosity like a child before uncomprehended wonders. She watched Lucy and the girl's disastrous romance astonished her. What did Lucy feel, what were her inner emotions? She longed to understand.

They went to bed at last and in the night Mrs. Weaver suffered from painful dreams, and several times she half awoke into a consciousness of definite pain. When the morning came she was unable to arise. She could not breathe, a devastating pressure contained itself within her head, her eyes were blinded with agonizing pain. Lucy heard her cries and came into the room, and frightened at the spectacle of her agony hurried back to her own room, dressed and ran out of the house to find a doctor.

The doctor came and administered morphia.

Mrs. Weaver fell into a lifeless sleep. She awakened with only a dull pain in her head. Suddenly she cried out in terror; Lucy rushed to her side.

"Oh, dear God!" she screamed.

Berger, the general practitioner, had made an astute diagnosis, and a truthful prediction. The pressure within the sinus had broken through and corroded the optic nerve; Mrs. Weaver was blind.

A few days later she was able to sit up. Arrangements had already been made for the auction of the household goods. Several things were being returned to the credit stores. There would probably be some money left. They planned to take rooms together in a cheap place and in the meanwhile they could plan to meet the expenses that would come with Lucy's baby.

"It is better to sell everything here," said Mrs. Weaver. "It's hard to say

what to keep, and we can get cheaper things for our new place."

"Yes, we can furnish it cheaply."

"I'll be able to do something. I can still teach you. We'll get along."

"Yes, we'll get along, mother. We can buy some cheap things. I'll soon learn."

"Surely, you'll learn soon, Lucy. I was thinking that now that everything will be paid off, we'll be able to get a few things on credit. A few dollars down, a few dollars a week. . . ."

A dollar down—a dollar forever! Weaver's ironic, scornful phrase entered her dull senses like a leaping flame. The uselessness of her struggle, the bitterness of her catastrophe, the meaninglessness of her terrible visitation assailed her like palpable antagonists. Was it a punishment? She could not believe that. She could not see why a punishment should come to her, what retribution she had invited.

She could not understand.

Bitter, hopeless tears came into her unseeing eyes. She heard Lucy cross the room and felt the girl's arms embracing her. Suddenly she felt calmer. A deep and fundamental courage, an unyielding firmness that disaster could not erase, strengthened her will. A hard purpose revealed itself obscurely in her sightless eyes.

She would still succeed. She had come a long way from the squalor of the odorous rooms above the grocery shop, now an inimical fortune drove her back a step, but she would go on again. Perhaps it would be easier now. Lucy would understand. They were marvelously close, one with each other, united in a community of misfortune.

"Lucy," she said, "don't worry about me. I was just thinking of something. We must not forget to buy a crib for the baby. Nothing cheap. We can afford that. Only a few dollars down . . . a few dollars a week. A—a pretty thing. . . ."

[THE END]

Gilding the Lily

By R. Jere Black, Jr.

SHE was the most ambitious woman in the world. Her overweening aspirations allowed her husband absolutely no rest. When he was elected mayor, she demanded that he resign to run for Congress. That goal attained, she worried him into the fight for Governor. The poor fellow never had a moment's peace. When finally, however, after a gruelling campaign, she

landed him in the President's chair, the exhausted man gave a long sigh of relief. This—thank Heaven—was the end! There being no higher pinnacle to scale, he could, at last, sit back and rest. For now, as Mistress of the White House, even she must be content.

But she wasn't. She wanted it painted red.



Spells of Night Forgotten

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

WHAT spells of nights forgotten,
With lures that once could be,
Make me pause and remember
In this night over me!

What moons now fled with magic?
What moods of dreamed delight?
They may come still upon me
In my eternal night . . .

They may come still upon me—
And they may linger yet
When all nights have forgotten
What I cannot forget.



His Book

By Edwin H. Blanchard

I

IT was a small, board-covered notebook, such as are sold by stationers everywhere. Across the front had been written, "*Esther Doane, M. H. S., English 3*"; this had been crossed out and below had been written in a more sprawling hand, "*Gregory Doane, His Book, Keep Out.*" The first few pages had been torn out roughly, and there followed twenty or thirty pages covered with the same loose and immature writing that was on the cover.

It was the book in which Gregory Doane wrote his poetry. He kept it locked in a drawer of the table in his room when he wasn't actually writing in it, and had further provided against intrusion by a large hand outlined in ink on the very first page, underneath which was the legend, "*Keep Out. This Book Is Private.*"

Gregory's book made up for a great many other things—for the fact that he was an odd stick, as he had heard his father say a great many times. He was not like Mortimer or Esther. Mortimer was eighteen, and in his last year in high school, and played tackle on the football team; he was taller than his father already. And Esther was a year older than Mortimer, and went to a lot of dances, and had boys at the house once in a while.

Gregory knew that he was somehow different from his brother and sister. He was fifteen, and hardly larger than most boys of twelve or thirteen, with a large head set on frail shoulders and luminous eyes looking out shyly from

under heavy black lashes. His father was worried because he didn't grow; it was, he told Gregory, because he didn't eat his bread crusts. Mortimer had told him that it was because he sat on his spine when he read.

Curiously enough, Gregory had found his book only a few days before D. H. came to the Marshvale High School. He had been exploring in the attic, and had come across this discarded theme book of Esther's. Once a few pages had been torn from the front, it was ready for his use. Odd phrases and words came into his head at times, and he began to write them in this book, beating out a rhythm with one foot. And then, a few days later, D. H. had come to teach Latin at high school, and Gregory had fallen in love with her.

Dorothy Hilton, he discovered her name was, and he thought the combination of syllables a lovely one. She was only a year or so out of college, a fair-haired, fresh-cheeked girl, lithe and agile. Gregory liked the way the sunlight pouring suddenly in at a classroom window made a streak of lighter gold in her hair; he liked the cold, frozen blue of her eyes, and her hands, slim and ivory-like, never still. From his seat near the back of the room, he would watch her as she called on one pupil and another and the vision would send him off into another age, another time.

This, it was plain to him, was to be an unrequited love; D. H. could never stoop to Gregory Doane. The visions that came to him were always of a Gregory Doane nursing a secret love

through the years, a Gregory Doane pale and dead, with her name engraved on his heart. He could never imagine himself saving her from some great danger; such a vision savoured too strongly of presumption. Sometimes she was a princess in a tower; but he was never the one who climbed up hand over hand on the matted ivy to her window. At his boldest, he never came further than to the foot of the tower, there to sing some few melancholy words that would stir her memory in after years when she was happy, and he was dead.

It was overpowering to be brought out of such a vision by her own cool voice, "You will go on from there, Gregory Doane." The *Cæsar* had been loosely clutched while the vision held him, and now the class was two pages further on, and there were little ripples of laughter when he began to translate what had been done fifteen minutes before.

"That will do," Miss Hilton always said. "I see you haven't been paying attention." Gregory's marks in Latin had been low for more than two weeks.

Gregory didn't mind the low marks, nor the laughter of his classmates, nor even the thought of what his father would say about the low marks. He was possessed by a vision. He was the victim of a great passion. There were only a few minutes in every day that counted. There was the daily period in her classroom, and there were the minutes that he spent with the book in his room. Late in the afternoon, he would slip up to his room, and opening wide the book on the table, he would write, biting the end of his pencil when the words refused to come, tying his legs up into a knot in the agony of composition.

Now that the days were getting longer, Gregory could sometimes find a few minutes for writing after dinner. Then, the light failing, he would put the book in the table drawer, lock the drawer and stow away the key deep in his pocket. When he was dead, they

would read his book, his father and his mother, and Mortimer and Esther, and they would be sorry then that they hadn't appreciated him more. Some one of them would take the book to D. H. and she would shut herself up in her room, and read the book into the small hours of the night, and a tear would drop now and then and blur one of his loveliest lines. And she would keep the book as long as she lived, tied up in a broad crimson ribbon, in a drawer handy somewhere, so that she could take it out every now and then, and look at it, and sigh and shake her head, and wish that she had known in time.

These thoughts came in the dusk, when Gregory sat, his chin cupped in the palms of his two hands, looking out at the gray blur that was the Hanscoms' barn. A suicide would be dramatic, but a gradual decline was more romantic. Unrequited love sapped a man's vitality until he grew pale and his eyes looked out from dark caverns. At the last, he was propped up in bed so that he could look out the window with his sad eyes, in the hope of seeing her once more; and just before he died, he would say, "I forgive her everything." The book was lying open on the table; he passed his fingers over it; her lips, even—

"Gregory! Gregory!" His mother was calling him.

He opened his door and went to the top of the stairs.

"I want you to come right down and put your brother's bicycle back where you found it."

"Yes'm," he answered. "Just a minute till I—"

"Gregory!" The sharper note in her voice stopped him as he was on the point of turning back into his own room. "No just-a-minute. I want you to come down this minute!"

"But, ma," he protested, "there's somethin' I've gotta put away. Honest, it's gotta be put away. It won't take me but just a minute."

His mother laughed. "You march your boots right downstairs. I want

you to put that bicycle away before it gets dark."

He moved reluctantly down the stairs. It would have taken only a few seconds to have put the book away safely; if he had only thought to do it before he answered his mother. It was lying wide open, right on top of his table.

He slammed the back door viciously, and wheeled the bicycle into the shed. Coming back through to the kitchen, he slammed two more doors in a feeble attempt to express his nervous concern. His mother stopped him in the kitchen.

"Take this cup of flour over to the Allens', Gregory," she told him. "Run along now, and don't spill it."

"Can't Mortimer take it?" he objected.

"Mortimer's busy changing his clothes," she answered. So Mortimer was upstairs. Gregory ran nearly all the way to the Allens' and back again. Depositing the empty cup on the kitchen table, he ran up the back stairs, his heart thumping in his chest. The door was shut. He had left it open. Someone had been in his room! The table was bare.

His book was gone! It wasn't anywhere around the room!

Gregory's upper lip quivered a little; this was mean. He walked through the little passageway that led from his room to the main part of the second floor; he was going to see if the book was in Mortimer's room. But Mortimer hadn't gone out yet; he was standing in front of his dresser, whistling through his teeth, tying his necktie. Mortimer saw him standing in the doorway, and turned around, tugging at his tie.

"What do you want?" he demanded suspiciously.

"You been in my room?" asked Gregory, lingering by the door.

"Yeah. Went in to get a collar-button. Why?"

"You took somethin' of mine. You give it back now."

"I what?" Mortimer's face became preternaturally innocent. "I took your

old collar-button, that's what I took. And you can't have it back till I'm through with it."

"I don't mean the collar-button. You know what I mean. Give it back or I'll—"

"Looka here now," said Mortimer, suddenly advancing on him. "You quit sayin' I took somethin' of yours or you'll get somethin' to make you sorry."

Gregory retreated suddenly from the doorway; Mortimer had an unpleasant trick of making you sorry for something, and it hurt. He went downstairs slowly. Should he tell his mother that Mortimer had something of his? If he did, she would want to know all about it. He must wait. Perhaps he could give Mortimer something—his silver belt buckle, or his knife with the can opener on it—and get the book back.

II

THE next afternoon Gregory had to stay after school, and it was after two when he came in the front door and closed it softly behind him. He heard voices from the living room.

He stopped and listened.

Mortimer's voice went rumbling along, reading something, and then Esther was giggling hysterically, and saying, "Oh, let me look, Mort, let me look at it." They were reading his book.

He tiptoed down the hall, and turned the knob of the living-room door slowly; he would surprise them. But as he opened the door a quarter of an inch, a half inch, it began to squeak, and he heard Mortimer say in a surprised tone, "Lookout. Here he comes now."

He flung the door wide, but all that he saw was the two of them sitting there on the divan, suspiciously quiet and composed.

"Oh, hello, Gregory, dear," Esther greeted him, with mocking emphasis. "I didn't hear you come in."

Gregory stopped, determined to ask

them what they had been reading a minute before, but something hard and bright in Esther's eye daunted him. He walked out through to the dining-room where a place was set for him. He could hear his mother moving about in the kitchen, humming an air over and over as she took up his dinner.

He began to eat mechanically. The whispering and giggling had begun again in the other room. They were reading his book again. He wished he were strong enough to snatch it out of their hands. He would wait until Mortimer went out, and then would go through his room and see if he could find the book. But, after dinner, when he did search there was no sign of the book; Mortimer had hidden it carefully.

That night at dinner it became evident that Mortimer and Esther intended to exploit their possession of his book.

"Pass the butter, will you, Esther," Mortimer asked, and added, "Thou turneth, turneth ever."

Esther answered him from across the table, "'Oh, stoppeth, stoppeth never.'"

Gregory felt his cheek go hot; those were his words; they were written in his book.

"Why, what's the matter, Gregory?" Esther was speaking to him, too innocent solicitude in her tone. "What are you blushing about?"

"Nothing!" snapped Gregory.

He stole a glance at his mother. Apparently she hadn't heard a word that either of them had said, and his father, too, was eating as if nothing had happened.

"Thy beautiful eye, D. H.," went on Mortimer, and Esther answered him again, "And thy beautiful teeth, D. H."

Those were his words, too. They brought from him a little inarticulate sound of rage; he crumpled his napkin down on his plate, and rushed out into the kitchen. After him came the pursuing sound of Mortimer's laughter.

Then his mother spoke, a faint note

of suspicion in her tone, "What were you doing to him, Mortimer?"

Then Mortimer, suddenly serious, was saying, "Why, nothing, Ma. I was just talking to Esther and he colored all up, and left the table. How should I know what's the matter with him?"

Then his mother came out to where he was standing, looking out into the darkness through a mist of tears.

"What made you leave the table, Gregory?" she asked.

"I—I swallowed something the wrong way," he explained.

"Well, there was no need to make all that fuss about it, was there?"

"No'm."

"Well, you come back now and finish your dinner."

He came back, slowly, reluctantly. His father, seemingly only now aware that something had gone wrong, looked up and said sharply:

"When will you ever learn to eat slowly, Gregory?"

Gregory said nothing. Mortimer was looking at him now, a little spark of malice at the back of his serious eyes. He was being put in the wrong as usual.

"For God's sake, stop your snuffling and eat your dinner," his father suddenly thundered at him.

Gregory bent his head and ate his pudding. Every spoonful was bitter.

After dinner he would tell his mother what Mortimer and Esther were doing with his book. But how could he? She would want to know everything. He would have to tell her who D. H. was. He wouldn't tell anybody that.

When they were all sitting in the living-room after dinner, Mortimer and Esther kept looking out the window, and saying, "There, I thought I saw D. H. coming up the walk" or "I think D. H. just went by, it looked like her beautiful hair." Gregory was slouched down in a Morris chair; he held a book in front of him, but in the half hour that Mortimer and Esther were sitting by the window he didn't

turn a page. Their words brought no acute pain to him now. They could take his book, and read his poetry, and laugh at it. He could stand it as long as they didn't find out who D. H. was and laugh at her.

That night, as he pulled the cool sheet up under his chin, he whispered, "Oh, God, please don't let them find out who she is, and please get me my book back again."

But the book didn't come back, and Gregory was unable to find it in spite of three afternoons spent in Mortimer's room when he was out. Mortimer and Esther were beginning to get tired of teasing him with words taken from his book. Hazarding a guess one day, Esther had accused him of writing D. H. for Doris Harker, a freckle-faced girl three doors down the street. Gregory had felt suddenly relieved by this accusation; they were off the trail; D. H. was safe, his own, known only to himself.

But one night, almost a week and a half after the book had disappeared from Gregory's table, Esther came in to dinner late, and as she passed Mortimer she leaned down and whispered something in his ear. Mortimer laughed and looked at Gregory significantly. A little later, when a slight silence had fallen on the table, Esther turned to Mortimer and said:

"What do you think, Mortimer? I've been taking Latin of D. H. all this time and never suspected it. 'Thy smooth white hands, D. H.,' she quoted.

Gregory choked suddenly and bolted from the table. They had found out who she was, they had found out. He ran up the back stairs, and locked himself in his room. He stood there a moment breathless, and then flung himself full length on his bed. It was a long time afterward, it seemed, that he heard footsteps come up the stairs and stop outside his door.

"Gregory," came his mother's voice.

He made no answer.

"Gregory," she repeated.

He wanted her to go away. He heard her hand fumbling with the knob.

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"Gregory, open the door," she said again.

"I don't want to," he answered weakly.

"Come, open the door, dear," she persisted.

"I don't want to open the door."

"Gregory Doane, you come and open this door." The patience was gone from her voice.

He got up slowly and approached the door; he fumbled for an instant with the key, and said, "It won't turn now, Ma, it's stuck or somethin'."

"Stuck, nothing!" his mother said incisively. "I know better. If you know what's good for you, you'll open up that door."

Gregory turned the key in the lock, and moved to the window, his back to his mother as she came in. She came over and stood close to him.

"What made you leave the table so?" she asked him.

"Mortimer'n Esther got somethin' of mine, and they won't give it back and they've got no right to have it," he blurted out suddenly. "You make 'em give it back to me, Ma, will you, Ma?"

"What have they got, Gregory?"

"Oh, somethin'." This was the moment that he had feared. She would want to know.

"Well, what is it? Are you ashamed to tell your mother what it is?"

"No."

"Then what is it?"

"A book."

"A book! Oh, Gregory, you're so silly. Aren't there enough books downstairs without making such a fuss over a single one?"

"But, Ma," Gregory pleaded, "this isn't just an ordinary book; this is my own particular book, and they've got no right to take it."

"Well, we'll see," said his mother, patently perplexed. "You come downstairs with me."

III

GREGORY followed his mother downstairs. His father was sitting next to

the lamp, reading the paper, and Mortimer and Esther were over on the divan, looking at him angrily.

"Gregory says you have a book of his, Mortimer," he mother began.

"A book?" Mortimer's eyes opened wide in mock astonishment. "A book? What would I want of a book of his?"

"He has, too; he has so," insisted Gregory from his mother's side. "He was saying things out of it, and Esther, too."

"Go get the book, Mortimer," his mother went on quietly.

Mortimer left the room. Esther sat and looked crossly at Gregory.

In a moment Mortimer was back again, the stiff-backed notebook in his hand, two little furrows of anger between his eyes.

"He can't take a joke," he said stormily, as he passed the book to his mother. "There's his old book. Full of mush about a high-school teacher. Fine thing to cry-baby over. He ought to be ashamed of himself, writing mush to Miss Hil—"

"You shut up!" screamed Gregory. "You shut up! You keep your mouth shut, you big fool, you've got no right to say what's in there. It's mine!"

He clutched convulsively at the book, but his mother held it out of his reach. Then suddenly the lamp shook and shot up a tongue of flame as his father's clenched fist came down on the table.

"Stop that noise!" he commanded. "I won't have it. Gregory, come here!"

Gregory moved slowly over to his father, his head down.

"Now, then," began his father, "what did you just call your brother?"

"I told him—" Gregory explained, "I asked him not to—not to—"

"Answer my question! What did you call your brother?"

"A fool—" softly.

"Don't you know any better than that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what did you do it for, then?"

"I don't know."

"Well, you get to bed just as fast as you can. I'll settle with you later."

Gregory moved off a step or two. His father picked up his paper as if to resume his reading.

"I want my book!" demanded Gregory.

"Didn't you hear what I said?" His father had put his paper down again.

"Yes," said Gregory, suddenly bold, "but I want my book."

"I'll see to that book," returned his father decisively. "It's made too confounded much trouble around here already. Now you get! I'll fix that book so there won't be any more trouble over it."

Gregory went out through the dining-room and up the back stairs, slowly. His feet were leaden. He was suddenly tired. It was all over now. His father would read the book, and then he'd burn it, and perhaps he would take him out of school, or tell the principal or something.

He lighted his lamp and undressed wearily, letting his clothes lie where they fell. D. H. was gone, and the book was gone, and everybody would laugh at him now as Esther and Mortimer had done. D. H. might even hear, and D. H., she, too, might even laugh at him. He blew out the lamp and climbed into bed.

Long moments after he heard steps coming up the stairs, and his door opened, and his mother stood there, a lamp in her hand. He looked over at her languidly, and she came and stood beside his bed, and smoothed down his hair. He noticed then that she had brought his book with her and had put it on the counterpane. For a moment Gregory wanted to ask her if it wasn't all right for him to have written those things in his book. She looked sorry for him. But there was something in the tension of her mouth that made him think she had been lately laughing at his book. He tried another question.

"Mortimer didn't have any right to take that book and read in it, did he, Ma?" he asked softly.

"No, dear," she assured him. "But that didn't excuse you calling him what

you did. That was very wicked of you."

She was sorry for him. But she was sorry because he was wicked, because he was her wicked boy. She bent down over him suddenly and kissed him on the cheek.

"Oh, Gregory," she murmured, "what possesses you to act so queerly? Do try and be a good boy."

He turned his face to the wall. In a moment he heard the door close, and darkness swallowed him up again.

So he had been the one who had been

wicked, after all. He reached out until his fingers touched the book where his mother had left it lying on the bed. He tucked it under his pillow. Hot tears of self pity came down over his cheeks. "Oh, God," he whispered, "kill Mortimer'n Esther for findin' out who it was."

He was wicked; he was even glad now that he was wicked.

He clenched his fist and beat a tattoo of rage against the wall. "Oh, kill em, God, kill 'em dead, for findin' out who she was."



The Fly

By S. Michael

HOWEVER can I put you by
Without feeling
Like a fly left to die
Alone on a big white ceiling?



LOVE is a dollar bill on the sidewalk; marriage, the result of two tramps seeing it at the same time.



A MAN dresses for dinner; a woman for her dinner companion.



HOI POLLOI—the people who didn't get rich in the late war.



To Posterity

By Paul Eldridge

I DO not believe in you, Posterity. I do not make you the judge of my generation. I am not elated thinking of the statues you will raise to some of us; my vengeance is not assuaged by the evil names you will heap upon others. Time will not be a perspective for you, even as it is not for us. Time will be but the thick dust raised by the hoofs of the galloping years.

I do not believe in you, Posterity, as I do not believe in my own generation. You, too, will lie, misinterpret, be puffed up with vanity; you, too, will prefer falsehood to truth, evil to good, superstition to wisdom.

I do not believe in you, Posterity. I

am not chagrined that I shall be forever still beneath you. I do not regret that I shall not be able to battle with you for food and liberty. I do not envy your beauty, your knowledge, your virtues. They will be like my own generation's—the kneaded refuse of the past—our hallucinations made sacred and divine.

I do not believe in you, Posterity. I do not bequeath anything to you. Not even a blade of grass that may shiver above my grave; nor a cordial salutation from the outer rim of Infinity; nor even a wink of recognition from the blue peak of a white star. I offer you—as I offer my own generation—my thumb wriggling upon the tip of my nose.



On a Lady

By Vincent Starrett

POETS her conquering beauty tell in rhyme,
And princes polish lyrics to her grace.
Bishops are writing ballads—even Time
Himself has written lines upon her face.



Répétition Générale

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

§ 1

LAMENTOSO.—My one permanent regret is that I did not take holy orders and become a bishop. The office, all things considered, is the most desirable in Christendom. All secular functionaries are exposed to the whims of the mob, but a bishop, once consecrated, is almost bullet-proof; even armed uprisings of the proletariat leave him unharmed. In fact, the rising of the proletariat commonly makes him more powerful than he was before, for the common people, no matter how much rationalists may labor with them, simply can't get rid of their congenital belief that he has the powers of the air under his thumb and can work very devastating and painful sorceries.

A bishop is well-paid, well entertained, highly respected, and free from care. If he wants to take a day, or a week, or a month off, he simply puts on his shovel hat and goes. If the mood strikes him to horn into a civilized dinner, with good cigars and sound wine, he intimates as much to some opulent and far-seeing layman of his diocese, and the birds go on the fire. If he is delivered of public remarks, however banal, the newspapers report him in full. If, on a gray day in winter, he is annoyed by his valet's knock at 7 A.M., he shoves the clock back, and sleeps until noon. If he dislikes anyone, all he has to do is to excommunicate the fellow. If he needs money, he simply arises in his cathedral and preaches upon Dives.

Altogether, a free, spacious and lordly life, full of ease, honor and contentment. Even atheists admit that a

bishop is somebody. I know several gentlemen of the craft, and can testify that all of them are serene. I try not to envy anyone in this world; all my thoughts are concentrated upon the world to come. But whenever I think of any bishop of my acquaintance, and contrast his k.k. life with my own hard lines, I find it very difficult to chase away the green cast that sicklies o'er my gills.

§ 2

The Peacock Art.—Of all the arts and half-arts—perhaps even above that of acting—is the art of criticism founded most greatly upon vanity. All criticism is, at bottom, an effort on the part of its practitioner to show off himself and his art at the expense of the artist and the art which he criticizes. The heavy modesty practised by certain critics is but a recognition of, and self-conscious attempt to diminish, the fundamental and ineradicable vainglory of criticism. The great critics are those who, recognizing the intrinsic, permanent and indeclinable egotism of the critical art, make no senseless effort to conceal it. The absurd critics are those who attempt to conceal it and, in the attempt, make their art and themselves doubly absurd.

§ 3

Woman and Sentiment.—It is not that a woman is less sentimental than a man, but that her sentiment comes from the heart, whereas the man's comes from the mind. She is thus not so easily addled by it as he is. She can

feel, and yet control her feelings. But the man, once the sentimental bee stings him, is like a ship that has lost its rudder. He cannot control his heart; it runs amuck; and the woman, loving yet perspicacious, thereupon coolly cuts another notch in her gun.

§ 4

The Influence of the Jest.—I have always been of the opinion that the so-called comic weeklies exercise a far more profound influence on the life of a community than the so-called serious weeklies. It is the trick of life to conduct itself not after the serious criticisms of itself, but after the humorous. The personal conduct of the average American community is affected more greatly by the *Lifes*, *Pucks* and *Judges* than by the *Nations*, *Freemans* and *New Republics*. The comic paper jokes about the loquacity of barbers have contrived to make barbers, the country over, taciturn. The cartoons of politicians in loud, checkered suits have made it impossible for politicians to wear such suits, however much they may feel like doing so. The jokes about be-diamonded Jews, clay-pipe-smoking Irishmen and chorus girls with penchants for broiled lobsters have had a similar critical effect: one rarely sees a Jew any more with a diamond, or an Irishman smoking a clay pipe, or a chorus girl ordering lobsters. The jokes have made them veer self-consciously in directions opposite to their erstwhile inclinations and tastes. What man, after twenty-five years of jokes on the subject, still has the courage to drop a pants-button into the collection plate on Sundays, or to eat a Coney Island frankfurter secure from the recalcitrant suggestion of dog meat, or to speak in laudatory terms of his mother-in-law without feeling a bit sheepish, or to have a dachshund for a pet, or to admit, without fear of being laughed at, that he was born in Oshkosh, Kalamazoo, Hoboken, Pottstown or Peoria?

What father ever thought of using a hair-brush for spanking purposes until

the comic papers ten years ago popularized the implement? What showman would ever have thought of using a negro's head as a profitable baseball target in summer park concessions if the humorous papers had not advertised the alleged uniform hardness of coon skulls and made the thing a popular comic legend? Consider the much mocked flowing tie that no self-respecting artist dares wear any more, and the long hair that professional pianists have been compelled to cut to avoid ridicule, and the suspicion of dishonesty under which even the most honest Greek has to labor, and the fact that the last creditor a man thinks of paying is his tailor, and the inescapable feeling a man has that all the old ladies on a summer hotel piazza are whispering scandal, and the regular defeats of William Jennings Bryan, and the bravery it requires today to wear long, flowing whiskers. Trivial things, true enough, but influence is to be measured as accurately in trivial concerns as in considerable. Name one serious journal that, in minor or important matters, has exercised one-tenth as much influence.

§ 5

The Pigmy as Giant.—One of the things at which I constantly marvel is the eminence in our larger American communities of absurd and trivial men. Take the city of New York, for example, and consider some of the men who are regarded as more or less important fellows. One whom I have in mind has done absolutely nothing worth while in all his life, yet, by virtue of serving on idiotic committees of every sort, attending public banquets to actors and moving picture directors, and conspicuously displaying himself at public meetings to raise funds for starving Armenian, Chinese and Esquimaux babies, he has contrived to have himself looked on by the community as a considerable person. Another, who also has never done anything, has made a public figure of himself, and is regarded as a serious personage by the newspapers, by

getting up balls, benefits, shows and drives for any convenient charity which he is able to think up. There are twenty or thirty other such mountebanks. They are pitiable clowns, but, to do them justice, they have succeeded in getting what they have gone after.

§ 6

On Justice.—One of the last of the ideas grasped by so-called civilized man is that of justice. It is, in fact, quite beyond the comprehension of all men save a very small minority. The common people have no notion of it whatsoever. What they call justice is simply condign punishment; they think that the thing is on tap in the courts when men they happen to fear, envy or otherwise dislike are rushed to trial with a great clamor, convicted by orgy, and sentenced to undergo cruel punishments. This is what the newspapers mean when they speak of justice. At the moment they demand that it be dispensed to so-called radicals. That is to say, they demand that all men accused of unpopular ideas be assaulted by armed bands of poltroons, official and extra-official, and then put on trial before prejudiced juries, denounced from the bench by judges eager for re-election, denied all opportunity to defend or even to state their words and acts, and so railroaded to Atlanta prison for ten or twenty years.

If an unpopular man is accused of crime, even though the law is supposed to assume that he is innocent until his guilt is proved, and the crime itself may be some artificial offense, wholly lacking in anti-social elements, the newspapers protest loudly if he is so much as admitted to bail. Any lawyer who enters an appearance for him is denounced as his accomplice, and depicted as an enemy of justice. During the late war, when all sorts of innocent (but unpopular) persons were being accused of fantastic acts of treason and espionage, many Bar Associations actually passed resolutions forbidding their members to defend such unfortunates. More, the

few lawyers who resisted that amazing order were attacked fiercely, and efforts were made to disbar some of them—in brief, to disbar men whose sole offense was that they tried to safeguard the plain rights of clients, as yet unconvicted of any crime, who appealed to them lawfully for aid and counsel!

Justice, of course, has nothing to do with such proceedings. It is one of the essential principles of justice that every case in law or equity shall be tried upon its intrinsic merits, without any reference whatever to any acts or ideas of the defendant (or plaintiff) lying outside the specific issue. It is another principle that the law, such as it is, shall be administered absolutely without favour, and that no laws shall be passed which show favour by their terms. To uphold these principles is one of the chief aims of all civilized constitutions. In every enlightened country the constitution forbids the passage of laws which put burdens upon special classes of men, and ordains that no man shall be subjected to a judicial process to which all other men are not equally liable.

In other words, a constitution is a defense set up around the citizen to protect him against excessive and unfair exercises of governmental power. The government is always very potent; the citizen is usually very weak. A constitution is a device for remedying his weakness by setting up rigid formalities. The government, in its dealings with him, must proceed in certain definite ways, clearly delimited. So far it may go, and no farther. It cannot attack him on general principles; it must attack him for specific acts, and these acts must be elaborately defined in advance, and he must have clear notice that they are unlawful, and they must be unlawful to all men equally.

Such is the theory of constitutions propounded by the older jurists. In the United States of today it seems to be wholly abandoned. Not long ago, indeed, a justice of the Supreme Court of the United States laid down the astounding new doctrine that the aim of a constitution is not to protect the citizen

against the government but to protect the government against the citizen. This confusion of constitution and law was certainly more revolutionary than any nonsense ever preached by a Bolshevik, or even by an anarchist. At one stroke it completely disposed of the theory lying at the bottom of free institutions—to wit, the theory that governmental powers ought to be strictly limited, and that any invasion of the reserved areas is the most serious of all conceivable offenses against human liberty.

But the new doctrine, unfortunately, was not actually new. It had been advocated and executed for a number of years by many judges of the inferior courts; today it is at least as well regarded as the elder contrary doctrine. No citizen of the United States, if he happens to harbor unpopular ideas, can now hope for justice in the courts, save in a few old-fashioned jurisdictions. The old rules of evidence do not apply to an unpopular man; anything and everything may be brought up against him. Nor is it necessary to prove him guilty of a specific crime, clearly defined in the laws. If the judge and jury dislike his ideas enough, almost any law may suffice for jailing him.

In Chicago, some time ago, a man known to cherish anti-capitalistic ideas, and hence very unpopular among the retired plumbers, elderly bookkeepers and G. A. R. pensioners who sit upon juries, was brought to trial on a charge of engaging in a conspiracy to overturn the government. The evidence showed that at the time of the alleged conspiracy he was actually in jail, and thus physically unable to take a hand in it. Nevertheless he was convicted with a whoop, the learned judge on the bench sentenced him to a long term in prison, and the Supreme Court of the United States later upheld the sentence. This man, of course, was clearly innocent. Whatever his crimes otherwise, he had certainly not engaged in the conspiracy that was before the court. But the grotesque popular view of justice demanded that he be punished for his general heresies, and this demand was satisfied by the

jury, passed as reasonable by the judge, and finally given the stamp of the highest tribunal in the land. The whole proceeding was a gross burlesque upon justice, in any true sense of the term. But it would be idle to deny that public opinion supported it. The populace, in fact, saw in it, not a burlesque, but justice itself.

Here, it seems to me, the United States pays heavy and inconvenient death duties upon its inheritance of English law. The English are a people who esteem the forthright act far more than they esteem philosophical ideas, and the fact is brilliantly visible in their law. While the jurists of the Continent were pursuing heavy speculations into the nature of such things as right and justice, the English were precipitating their jurisprudence into a series of rough-and-ready rules of action, and in the end they came to regard the prompt and merciless execution of those rules as of far more importance than abstract questions of right and wrong.

English justice, so-called, was until very lately extraordinarily unjust. On the criminal side it frankly laid the heaviest stress upon the quick punishment of crime, and often this quick punishment was achieved at great cost to the plain rights of the accused. It is only a few years ago that he acquired the privilege of appealing from the verdict of a jury, even when it was obviously the product of the unfairness of the judge. He got a prompt trial, to be sure, and he faced a jury theoretically of his peers, but too often these boons simply brought him to a prompt hanging. It was the magnificent savagery of the system, in fact, that got it a reputation for effectiveness, and it is this savagery which Americans still think of when they praise it. Its most eager partisans are precisely the idealists who always demand that an I. W. W. be hanged first and tried afterward. What they admire in it is not any capacity that it may have had for protecting the innocent against injustice, but its obvious capacity for bringing the unpopular to almost instantaneous punishment.

But to this heritage from England, the judges of the United States have added something a good deal worse, and that is the custom of widening the scope of specific laws by judicial interpretation. The English judges, whatever their barbarous delight in cruelty otherwise, at least observe the ancient rule that criminal statutes are to be construed strictly, and that no man is to be punished for a crime not clearly defined. But in America, for a score of years past, the tendency has been all the other way. The case of the so-called Mann Act offers a convenient example. This act was passed to put down the interstate traffic in prostitutes, and nothing else. The whole debate upon it, when it was before Congress, showed its plain intent; moreover, that intent has since been frequently stated by its author. But the moment it was upon the books the courts began deciding that *any* transportation of an unchaste woman across a state line, however little the woman could be called a prostitute or the man transporting her a procurer, was a violation of the law, and this amazing extension of the terms of the act was finally upheld by a majority of one in the Supreme Court.

One of the dissenting justices, Dr. McKenna, denounced the decision from the bench as an incitement to blackmail. But blackmail is not its only evil product. The act thus made a crime by judicial fancy is one that is frequently committed by men who are certainly anything but criminals. Well, any such man, if he happens to be unpopular enough, runs a risk of serving five years at Atlanta—not for his crime, for he has committed no intelligible crime, but for his unpopularity. During the late war, at a time when judges and juries were eager to please the populace by harassing Germans, a German naval officer interned in this country was actually sent to prison in this way. His technical offense was that he had paid for the transportation of a woman across a state line, and that this woman afterward turned out to be unchaste!

I was acquainted with some of his fellow officers, and well remember their astonishment—and that of the American officers who knew him—when he was solemnly put on trial as a white slaver, and convicted by newspaper outcry. Obviously, he would not have been brought to trial at all if he had been an Englishman or a Frenchman; he was imprisoned simply because he happened to be an officer of the enemy nation, and hence fair game for demagogues. I was told at the time by an official of the Department of Justice that there were secret instructions that no man not actually engaged in transporting women commercially was to be prosecuted under the act—*save there was a public demand for it!* That is to say, no man was to be accused idiotically of white slaving *save he was unpopular!*

The Espionage Act was extended by judicial interpretation in exactly the same manner, and many of the persons jailed under it were quite innocent of any act that Congress intended to prohibit. There is good ground for arguing, as Dr. Zechariah Chafee has done, that the celebrated Debs was one of these. The courts had to strain the plain meaning of the statute to fetch Debs. They had to base their reasoning, not upon the obvious effect of the acts he admitted, but upon their possibly remote and indirect effects. A strict interpretation would have liberated him instantly, as it actually liberated many prisoners, under exactly the same circumstances, in England. The truth is that he was sent to prison, not because he offered any actual impediment to the conduct of the war, but because Socialists who refused to desert their party and its principles were extremely unpopular at the time, and he was one who resolutely refused. The demand for his jailing long preceded any specific accusation against him; by the time he came into court at last it was a practical certainty that he would be convicted of something or other—that a law would be found to punish him for his general rambunctiousness.

This law was found in the judicial

appendix to the Espionage Act. If search there had failed, it would have been found somewhere else. His conviction, to the popular mind, was sufficient evidence of his guilt; the mob is always in favor of the prosecution. And once he was in jail and deprived of his usual means of rabble-rousing on his own account, the agents of the government—inspired by the implacable rancor of Dr. Wilson, whose hypocrisies Debs had indelicately derided—proceed to manufacture so gaudy a legend of his villainy that, save among Socialists, there was never any general demand for his release.

It must be plain that these growing tendencies in American jurisprudence—these wholesale sacrifices of all fairness and justice to popular passions and transient notions of what is expedient and seemly—are in sharp conflict with some of the fundamental principles of free government. Constitutions are not made to protect the powerful and popular; they are made to protect the weak and friendless. If a citizen, because he happens to cherish political ideas that are not yet accepted or have gone out of fashion, is liable to be deprived of all his constitutional rights and sent to prison merely to please the mob of the moment or to soothe the vanity of some passing demagogue, then it is absurd to talk of liberty.

I am certainly no Socialist, nor have I been engaged, in recent years, in the white slave trade; I am too old and wise to be the one or to do the other. More, I regard all political ideas as so trivial that I couldn't imagine myself sacrificing a 5-cent cigar, to say nothing of my liberty, to even the most gorgeous of them. I'd be a great deal safer and happier if all Socialists came down with fatal cases of lockjaw tomorrow, and with them all Liberals, Democrats and Republicans. I not only disbelieve in Socialism; I also disbelieve in democracy. But when the courts undertake to find a law to jail any man of unpopular political ideas, however innocent his actual acts and intent; when they flog and distort the plain text of the statutes

in order to bring them into accord with current and temporary notions of what is nice; when the highest tribunal in the land decides that a Socialist, even though he be safely behind the bars, can still be guilty of the crime of conspiracy; when, as happened lately, a justice of the Supreme Court of New York formally lays down the doctrine that "the courts . . . must stand at all times as the representatives of capital"—when these things pass unchallenged, and are even lauded eloquently by presumably sane men, then I begin to meditate unpleasantly.

Suppose that, by some process allied to that now on view in England, the mob suddenly runs amok, and, despite the hard effort of the old-line politicians, converts one or more of the big states of the East into a Socialist or granger paradise. The thing is not likely, I grant you, but don't say that it is impossible. Well, suppose it accomplished, and all the judges now in office turned out, and a new set of Bolshevik judges set on the bench. What if they decide to honor the precedents set by their predecessors? What if they begin to torture and manhandle the law as it has been tortured and manhandled by judges of the other party during the past five or ten years? What if they proceed on the theory that a man who is against Socialism has no rights whatever in their august bull-rings of justice—that he is always guilty of *something*, no matter what he has actually said or done—that he deserves to go to jail, if for no other reason, because the great majority of right-thinking men, i.e., Socialists, are tired of his heresies and want to hear no more from him?

I doubt that that would be a pleasant situation for me. I doubt that it would be pleasant for most of the gay fellows who find the present state of affairs so agreeable to their taste.

§ 7

Arnold Bennett and His Interests.—Arnold Bennett's latest fat book is entitled, "Things That Have Interested

Me." In 1906, Mr. Bennett published another such book entitled, "Things That Interested Me," and the year following still another entitled, "Things Which Have Interested Me." Neither of these previous volumes contained any of the things that interest Mr. Bennett in the present volume. This present volume, in its 332 pages, brings forth Mr. Bennett's assertion that he is, and has been, interested in operatic performances, Jerry Oxford, Brabazon, Calais harbor during the period of mobilization, women who engage in war work, funny stories, grimness and optimism, *Der Rosenkavalier*, translating literature into life, housekeeping, Asquith, barbers, bicarbonate of soda, the Casino ball, coal-pits, self-control, petrol, football, the psychology of Russia, railway accidents, the paper shortage, patriots, politics and morals, flag-days, the privilege of dogma, the Royal Academy, gaming, plate-breaking, the truth about revolutions, Lord Milner, ministers, what's wrong with the theater, farmers, freedom of discussion, Wagner after the war, charity carnivals, law banquets, the hardships of the ruling class, Cail-

laux, teaching history, Prohibition, hotels, English society in the Nineties, profiteers, eating, the transatlantic view of things, James Gordon Bennett, Portuguese streets, the Jockey Club, Balzac's technique, tailoring, theatrical premières, the Gospel, the siege of Paris, railway guides, Pavlowa, the *Echo de Paris*, short stories, Byron, coupons, the *Merry Widow* waltz, pro-Germanism, Foch, prayer, Egyptology, play-licensing, Ros-tand, cornets, the life of a girl, octogenarians, morphia, prophylaxis, the Quai d'Orsay terminus, street cries, cartoonists, Rops, sex equality, the French jury system, the London Subway, ritualism, prize fights, the two Guitrys, women's education, biography, the League of Nations, Paris flats and streets, Henry James, and half a hundred other matters. The book, together with the two previous books, provides automatically by far the best and most searching criticism of Arnold Bennett that has yet appeared. His artistic weakness lies in the fact that he is too easily interested by too many things. The true artist's interests are strictly confined.



WHEN a beautiful woman praises the virtues of celibacy, she achieves an effect similar to that of a bottle of champagne delivering an appeal for Prohibition.



DIAGNOSIS: the doctor's verdict after he has appraised your clothes.



THE law protects everybody who can afford to hire a good lawyer.



Enigma

By Edith Julia Simons

"GEE, I wish he wouldn't," he reflected. "He said he was going to lick me when I got home from school today. Don't know what for, I'm sure. Gee, I don't see why fellers have to get licked, anyway."

"Going to get licked—going to get licked," ran the refrain through his mind, as he went to the black-board and made a face behind his teacher's back.

"Going to get licked—going to get licked," he thought more miserably, as he ducked his head under his desk, and took a big bite out of an apple.

"Wonder how she'd like to get licked," he thought, as he leaned over, and pinched the girl in front of him, and pulled her hair quickly.

"Can't see why fellers have to have

fathers, anyway," he said to the tiny birds, as he stuffed them and their nest into his pocket, and looked ruefully at his torn coat and stockings after he slid down from the tree.

"Gee, a feller can't have any fun at all, any more," he thought, as he tied a can to a dog's tail, and sent him howling down the street.

"Guess there's no hurry about going home today," he whistled as he threw a stone at a cat, and almost hit an old lady.

"Going to get licked—going to get licked, and I don't know what for," he thought, as he trudged wearily around the streets, and darkness fell.

"Gee, a feller never has a chance any more," he wailed, as he entered the house where his father waited.



FASHION has its martyrs. Consider the sad lot of all the bow-legged little girls who waited so patiently to grow up and wear long skirts.



ALL men fall into one of two classes—statues or pedestals.



Unlighted Lamps

By Sherwood Anderson

I

MARY COCHRAN went out of the rooms where she lived with her father, Doctor Lester Cochran, at seven o'clock on a Sunday evening. It was June of the year nineteen hundred and eight and Mary was eighteen years old. She walked along Tremont to Main Street and across railroad tracks to Upper Main, lined with small shops and shoddy houses, a rather quiet, cheerless place on Sundays, when there were few people about.

She had told her father she was going to church but did not intend doing anything of the kind. She did not know what she wanted to do.

"I'll get off by myself and think," she told herself as she walked slowly along. The night, she thought, promised to be too fine to be spent sitting in a stuffy church and hearing a man talk of things that had apparently nothing to do with her own problem. Her own affairs were approaching a crisis and it was time for her to begin thinking seriously of her future.

The thoughtful, serious state of mind in which Mary found herself had been induced in her by a conversation had with her father on the evening before. Without any preliminary talk and quite suddenly and abruptly he had told her that he was a victim of heart disease and might die at any moment. He had made the announcement as they stood together in the Doctor's office, back of which were the rooms in which the father and daughter lived.

It was growing dark outside when she came into the office and found him sitting alone. The office and living rooms were on the second floor of an old frame

building in the town of Huntersburg, Illinois, and as the doctor talked he stood beside his daughter near one of the windows that looked down into Tremont Street.

The hushed murmur of the town's Saturday night life went on in Main Street just around a corner and the evening train, bound for Chicago, fifty miles to the east, had just passed. The hotel bus came rattling out of Lincoln Street and went through Tremont toward the hotel on Lower Main. A cloud of dust kicked up by the horses' hoofs floated on the quiet air. A straggling group of people followed the bus and the row of hitching posts on Tremont Street was already lined with buggies in which farmers and their wives had driven into town for the evening of shopping and gossip.

After the station bus had passed, three or four more buggies were driven into the street. From one of them a young man helped his sweetheart to alight. He took hold of her arm with a certain air of tenderness, and a hunger to be touched thus tenderly by a man's hand, that had come to Mary many times before, returned at almost the same moment her father made the announcement of his approaching death.

As the doctor began to speak, Barney Smithfield, who owned a livery barn that opened into Tremont Street directly opposite the building in which the Cochrans lived, came back to his place of business from his evening meal. He stopped to tell a story to a group of men gathered before the barn door and a shout of laughter arose. One of the loungers in the street, a strongly built young man in a checkered suit, stepped away from the others and stood before

the liveryman. Having seen Mary he was trying to attract her attention. He also began to tell a story, and as he talked he gesticulated, waved his arms and from time to time looked over his shoulder to see if the girl still stood by the window and if she were watching.

Doctor Cochran had told his daughter of his approaching death in a cold, quiet voice. To the girl it had seemed that everything concerning her father must be cold and quiet.

"I have a disease of the heart," he said flatly, "have long suspected there was something of the sort the matter with me and on Thursday when I went into Chicago I had myself examined. The truth is I may die at any moment. I would not tell you but for one reason—I will leave little money and you must be making plans for the future."

The Doctor stepped nearer the window where his daughter stood with her hand on the frame. The announcement had made her a little pale and her hand trembled. In spite of his apparent coldness he was touched and wanted to reassure her.

"There now," he said hesitatingly, "it'll likely be all right after all. Don't worry. I haven't been a doctor for thirty years without knowing there's a great deal of nonsense about these pronouncements on the part of experts. In a matter like this, that is to say when a man has a disease of the heart, he may putter about for years."

He laughed uncomfortably.

"I've even heard it said that the best way to insure a long life is to contract a disease of the heart."

With these words the doctor had turned and walked out of his office, going down a wooden stairway to the street. He had wanted to put his arm about his daughter's shoulder as he made the announcement of his coming death, but never having shown any feeling in his relations with her could not sufficiently release some tight thing in himself.

Mary had stood for a long time looking down into the street. The young man in the checkered suit, whose name

was Duke Yetter, had finished telling his tale and a shout of laughter arose. She turned to look toward the door through which her father had passed and dread took possession of her. In all her life there had never been anything warm and close. She shivered although the night was warm and with a quick girlish gesture passed her hand over her eyes.

The gesture was but an expression of a desire to brush away the cloud of fear that had settled down upon her, but it was misinterpreted by Duke Yetter, who now stood a little apart from the other men before the livery barn. When he saw Mary's hand go up he smiled and turning quickly to be sure he was unobserved, began jerking his head and making motions with his hand as a sign that he wished her to come down into the street where he would have an opportunity to join her.

II

On the Sunday evening, Mary, having walked through Upper Main, turned into Wilmott, a street of workmen's houses. During that year the first sign of the march of factories westward from Chicago into the prairie towns had come to Huntersburg. A Chicago manufacturer of furniture had built a plant in the sleepy little farming town, hoping thus to escape the labor organizations that had begun to give him trouble in the city. At the upper end of town, in Wilmott, Swift, Harrison and Chestnut Streets, and in cheap, badly-constructed frame houses, most of the factory workers lived. On the warm summer evening they were gathered on the porches at the front of the houses and a mob of children played in the dusty streets. Red-faced men in white shirts and without collars and coats slept in chairs or lay sprawled on strips of grass or on the hard earth before the doors of the houses.

The laborers' wives had gathered in groups and stood gossiping by the fences that separated the yards. Occasionally the voice of one of the women arose sharp and distinct above the steady flow

of voices that ran like a murmuring river through the hot little streets.

In the roadway two children had got into a fight. A thick-shouldered, red-haired boy struck another boy who had a pale sharp-featured face a blow on the shoulder. Other children came running. The mother of the red-haired boy brought the promised fight to an end.

"Stop it, Johnny, I tell you to stop it. I'll break your neck if you don't!" the woman screamed.

The pale boy turned and walked away from his antagonist. As he went slinking along the sidewalk past Mary Cochran, his sharp little eyes, burning with hatred, looked up at her.

Mary went quickly along. The strange new part of her native town, with the hubbub of life always stirring and asserting itself; had a strong fascination for her. There was something dark and resentful in her own nature that made her feel at home in the crowded place where life carried itself off darkly, with a blow and an oath. The habitual silence of her father and the mystery concerning the unhappy married life of her father and mother that had affected the attitude toward her of the people of the town had made her own life a lonely one and had encouraged in her a rather dogged determination to in some way think her own way through the things of life she could not understand.

And back of Mary's thinking there was an intense curiosity and a courageous determination toward adventure. She was like a little animal of the forest that has been robbed of its mother by the gun of a sportsman and, driven by hunger, goes forth to seek food.

Twenty times during the year she had walked alone at evening in the new and fast-growing factory district of her town. She was eighteen and had begun to look like a woman and she felt that other girls of the town of her own age would not have dared to walk in such a place alone. The feeling made her somewhat proud and as she went along she looked boldly about.

Among the workers in Wilmott

Street, men and women who had been brought to town by the furniture manufacturer, were many who spoke in foreign tongue, and Mary walked among them and liked the sound of the strange voices. To be in the street made her feel that she had gone out of her town and on a voyage into a strange land. In Lower Main Street or in the residence streets in the eastern part of town where lived the young men and women she had always known and where lived also the merchants, the clerks, the lawyers and the more well-to-do American workmen of Huntersburg, she felt always a secret antagonism to herself. The antagonism was not due to anything in her own character. She was sure of that. She had kept so much to herself that she was in fact but little known.

"It is because I am the daughter of my mother," she told herself and did not walk often in the part of town where other girls of her class lived.

Mary had been so often in Wilmott Street that many of the people had begun to feel acquainted with her.

"She is the daughter of some farmer and has got into the habit of walking into town," they said.

A red-haired, broad-hipped woman who came out at the front door of one of the houses nodded to her. On a narrow strip of grass beside another house sat a young man with his back against a tree. He was smoking a pipe, but when he looked up and saw her he took the pipe from his mouth. She decided he must be an Italian, his hair and eyes were so black.

"Ne bella! si fai un onore a passare di qua," he called waving his hand and smiling.

Mary went to the end of Wilmott Street and came out upon a country road. It seemed to her that a long time must have passed since she left her father's presence although the walk had in fact occupied but a few minutes. By the side of the road and on top of a small hill there was a ruined barn, and before the barn a great hole filled with the charred timbers of what had once been a farmhouse. A pile of stones lay

beside the hole and these were covered with creeping vines. Between the site of the house and the barn there was an old orchard in which grew a mass of tangled weeds.

Pushing her way in among the weeds, many of which were covered with blossoms, Mary found herself a seat on a rock that had been rolled against the trunk of an old apple tree. The weeds half concealed her and from the road only her head was visible. Buried away thus in the weeds she looked like a quail that runs in the tall grass and that on hearing some unusual sound stops, throws up its head, and looks sharply about.

The doctor's daughter had been to the decayed old orchard many times before. At the foot of the hill on which it stood the streets of the town began, and as she sat on the rock she could hear faint shouts and cries coming out of Wilmott Street. A hedge separated the orchard from the fields on the hillside. Mary intended to sit by the tree until darkness came creeping over the land and to try to think out some plan regarding her future. The notion that her father was soon to die seemed both true and untrue, but her mind was unable to take hold of the thought of him as physically dead.

For the moment, death in relation to her father did not take the form of a cold inanimate body that was to be buried in the ground, instead it seemed to her that her father was not to die but to go away somewhere on a journey. Long ago her mother had done that. There was a strange hesitating sense of relief in the thought.

"Well," she told herself, "when the time comes I shall also be setting out; I shall get out of here and into the world."

On several occasions Mary had gone to spend a day with her father in Chicago and she was fascinated by the thought that soon she might be going there to live. Before her mind's eye floated a vision of long streets filled with thousands of people, all strangers to herself. To go into such streets and

to live her life among strangers would be like coming out of a waterless desert and into a cool forest carpeted with tender young grass.

In Huntersburg she had always lived under a cloud and now she was becoming a woman and the close stuffy atmosphere she had always breathed was becoming constantly more and more oppressive. It was true no direct question had ever been raised touching her own standing in the community life, but she felt that a kind of prejudice against her existed. While she was still a baby there had been a scandal involving her father and mother. The town of Huntersburg had rocked with it, and when she was a child people had sometimes looked at her with mocking, sympathetic eyes.

"Poor child. It's too bad," they said.

Once, on a cloudy summer evening, when her father had driven off to the country and she sat alone in the darkness by his office window, she heard a man and woman in the street mention her name. The couple stumbled along in the darkness on the sidewalk below the office window.

"That daughter of Doc Cochran's is a nice girl," said the man.

The woman laughed.

"She's growing up and attracting men's attention now. Better keep your eyes in your head. She'll turn out bad. Like mother, like daughter," the woman replied.

For ten or fifteen minutes Mary sat on the stone beneath the tree in the orchard and thought of the attitude of the town toward herself and her father.

"It should have drawn us together," she told herself, and wondered if the approach of death would do what the cloud that had for years hung over them had not done.

It did not at the moment seem to her cruel that the figure of death was soon to visit her father. In a way death had become for her and for the time a lovely and gracious figure intent upon good. The hand of death was to open the door out of her father's house and into life. With the cruelty of youth she thought

first of the adventurous possibilities of the new life.

Mary sat very still. In the long weeds the insects that had been disturbed in their evening song began to sing again. A robin flew into the tree beneath which she sat and struck a clear sharp note of alarm. The voices of people in her town's new factory district came softly up the hillside. They were like bells of distant cathedrals calling people to worship. Something within the girl's breast seemed to break and, putting her head into her hands, she rocked slowly back and forth. Tears came, accompanied by a warm tender impulse toward the living men and women of Huntersburg.

And then from the road came a call. "Hello there, kid!" shouted a voice, and Mary sprang quickly to her feet. Her mellow mood passed like a puff of wind and in its place hot anger came.

In the road stood Duke Yetter, who from his loafing place before the livery barn had seen her set out for the Sunday evening walk and had followed. When she went through Upper Main Street and into the new factory district he was sure of his conquest.

"She doesn't want to be seen walking with me," he had told himself, "that's all right. She knows well enough I'll follow but doesn't want me to put in an appearance until she is well out of sight of her friends. She's a little stuck up and needs to be brought down a peg, but what do I care? She's gone out of her way to give me this chance and maybe she's only afraid of her dad."

Duke climbed the little incline out of the road and came into the orchard but when he reached the pile of stones covered by vines he stumbled and fell. He arose and laughed. Mary had not waited for him to reach her but had started toward him, and when his laugh broke the silence that lay over the orchard she sprang forward and with her open hand struck him a sharp blow on the cheek. Then she turned and as he stood with his feet tangled in the vines ran out to the road.

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"If you follow or speak to me I'll get someone to kill you!" she screamed.

Mary walked along the road and down the hill toward Wilmott Street. Broken bits of the story concerning her mother that had for years circulated in town had reached her ears. Her mother, it was said, had disappeared on a summer night long ago and a young town rough, who had been in the habit of loitering before Barney Smithfield's livery barn, had gone away with her. Now another young rough was trying to make up to her. The thought made her furious.

Her mind groped about striving to lay hold of some weapon with which she could strike a telling blow at Duke Yetter. In desperation it lit upon the figure of her father already broken in health and now about to die.

"My father just wants a chance to kill some such fellow as you!" she shouted, turning to face the young man, who having got clear of the mass of vines in the orchard, had followed her into the road. "My father just wants to kill someone because of the lies that have been told in this town about my mother!"

Having given way to the impulse to threaten Duke Yetter, Mary was instantly ashamed of her outburst and walked rapidly along, the tears running from her eyes. With a hanging head Duke walked at her heels.

"I didn't mean no harm, Miss Cochran," he pleaded. "I didn't mean no harm. Don't tell your father. I was only funning with you. I tell you I didn't mean no harm."

III

THE light of the summer evening had begun to fail and the faces of the people made soft little ovals of light as they stooped grouped under the dark porches or by the fences in Wilmott Street. The voices of the children had become subdued and they also stood in groups. They became silent as Mary passed and stood with upturned faces and staring eyes.

"The lady doesn't live very far away. She must be almost a neighbor," she heard a woman's voice saying in English.

When she turned her head she saw only a crowd of dark-skinned men standing before a house. From within the house came the sound of a woman's voice singing a child to sleep.

The young Italian, who had called to her earlier in the evening and who was now apparently setting out on his own Sunday evening's adventures, came along the sidewalk and walked quickly away into the darkness. He had dressed himself in his Sunday clothes and had put on a black derby hat and a stiff white collar, set off by a red necktie. The shining whiteness of the collar made his brown skin look almost black. He smiled boyishly and raised his hat awkwardly, but did not speak.

Mary kept looking back along the street to be sure Duke Yetter had not followed, but in the dim light could see nothing of him. Her angry, excited mood went away.

She did not want to go home and decided it was too late to go to church. From Upper Main Street there was a short street that ran eastward and fell rather sharply down a hillside to a creek and a bridge that marked the end of the town's growth in that direction. She went down along the street to the bridge and stood in the failing light intently watching two boys who were fishing in the creek.

A broad-shouldered man dressed in rough clothes came down along the street and stopping on the bridge spoke to her. It was the first time she had ever heard a citizen of her home town speak with feeling of her father.

"You are Doctor Cochran's daughter?" he asked hesitatingly. "I guess you don't know who I am, but your father does."

He pointed toward the two boys who sat with fishpoles in their hands on the weed-grown bank of the creek.

"Those are my boys and I have four other children," he explained. "There is another boy and I have three girls.

One of my daughters has a job in a store. She is as old as yourself."

The man explained his relations with Doctor Cochran. He had been a farm laborer, he said, and had but recently moved to town to work in the furniture factory. During the previous winter he had been ill for a long time and had no money. While he lay in bed one of his boys fell out of a barn loft and there was a terrible cut in his head.

"Your father came every day to see us and he sewed up my Tom's head." The laborer turned away from Mary and stood with his cap in his hand looking toward the boys. "I was down and out and your father not only took care of me and the boys but he gave my old woman money to buy the things we had to have from the stores in town here, groceries and medicines."

The man spoke in such low tones that Mary had to lean forward to hear his words. Her face almost touched the laborer's shoulder.

"Your father is a good man and I don't think he is very happy," he went on. "The boy and I got well and I got work here in town but he wouldn't take any money from me. 'You know how to live with your children and with your wife. You know how to make them happy. Keep your money and spend it on them,' that's what he said to me."

The laborer went on across the bridge and along the creek bank toward the spot where his two sons sat fishing and Mary leaned on the railing of the bridge and looked at the slow-moving water. It was almost black in the shadows under the bridge and she thought that it was thus her father's life had been lived.

"It has been like a stream running always in shadows and never coming out into the sunlight," she thought, and fear that her own life would run on in darkness gripped her.

A great new love for her father swept over her and in fancy she felt his arms about her. As a child she had continually dreamed of caresses received at her father's hands and now the dream came back.

For a long time she stood looking

down at the stream and she resolved that the night should not pass without an effort on her part to make the old dream come true. When she again looked up, the laborer had built a little fire of sticks at the edge of the stream.

"We catch bullheads here," he called. "The light of the fire draws them close to the shore. If you want to come and try your hand at fishing the boys will lend you one of the poles."

"Oh, I thank you, I won't do it tonight," Mary said, and then, fearing she might suddenly begin weeping and that if the man spoke to her again she would find herself unable to answer, she hurried away.

"Good-by!" shouted the man and the two boys. The word came quite spontaneously out of the three throats and created a sharp trumpet-like effect that rang like a glad cry across the heaviness of her mood.

IV

WHEN his daughter Mary went out for her evening walk, Doctor Cochran sat for an hour alone in his office. It began to grow dark and the men who all afternoon had been sitting on chairs and boxes before the livery barn across the street went home for the evening meal. The noise of voices grew faint and sometimes for five or ten minutes there was silence. Then from some distant street came a child's cry. Presently church bells began to ring.

The Doctor was not a very neat man and sometimes for several days he forgot to shave. With a long lean hand he stroked his half-grown beard. His illness had struck deeper than he had admitted even to himself and his mind had an inclination to float out of his body. Often when he sat thus his hands lay in his lap and he looked at them with a child's absorption. It seemed to him they must belong to someone else. He grew philosophic:

"It's an odd thing about my body. Here I've lived in it all these years and how little use I have had of it. Now it's going to die and decay, never having been

used. I wonder why it did not get another tenant."

He smiled sadly over this fancy but went on with it:

"Well I've had thoughts enough concerning people and I've had the use of these lips and a tongue but I've let them lie idle. When my Ellen was here living with me I let her think me cold and unfeeling while something within me was straining and straining trying to tear itself loose."

He remembered how often as a young man he had sat in the evening in silence beside his wife in this same office and how his hands ached to reach across the narrow space that separated them and touch her hands, her face, her hair.

Well, everyone in town had predicted his marriage would turn out badly! His wife had been an actress with a company that came to Huntersburg and got stranded there. At the same time the girl became ill and had no money to pay for her room at the hotel. The young doctor had attended to that and when the girl was convalescent took her to ride about the country in his buggy. Her life had been a hard one and the notion of leading a quiet existence in the little town appealed to her.

And then after the marriage and after the child was born she had suddenly found herself unable to go on living with the silent, cold man. There had been a story of her having run away with a young sport, the son of a saloon-keeper who had disappeared from town at the same time, but the story was untrue. Lester Cochran had himself taken her to Chicago where she got work with a company going into the far western states. Then he had taken her to the door of her hotel, had put money into her hands and in silence and without even a farewell kiss had turned and walked away.

The Doctor sat in his office living over that moment and other intense moments when he had been deeply stirred and had been on the surface so cool and quiet. He wondered if the woman had known. How many times he had asked himself that question. After he left her

that night at the hotel door she never wrote.

"Perhaps she is dead," he thought for the thousandth time.

A thing happened that had been happening at odd moments for more than a year. In Doctor Cochran's mind the remembered figure of his wife became confused with the figure of his daughter. When at such moments he tried to separate the two figures, to make them stand out distinct from each other, he was unsuccessful. Turning his head slightly he imagined he saw a white girlish figure coming through a door out of the rooms in which he and his daughter lived. The door was painted white and swung slowly in a light breeze that came in at an open window. The wind ran softly and quietly through the room and played over some papers lying on a desk in a corner. There was a soft swishing sound as of a woman's skirts. The doctor arose and stood trembling.

"Which is it? Is it you, Mary, or is it Ellen?" he asked huskily.

On the stairway leading up from the street there was the sound of heavy feet and the outer door opened. The doctor's weak heart fluttered and he dropped heavily back into his chair.

A man came into the room. He was a farmer, one of the doctor's patients, and coming to the center of the room he struck a match, held it above his head and shouted.

"Hello!" he called.

When the doctor arose from his chair and answered he was so startled that the match fell from his hand and lay burning faintly at his feet.

The young farmer had sturdy legs that were like two pillars of stone supporting a heavy building, and the little flame of the match that burned and fluttered in the light breeze on the floor between his feet threw dancing shadows along the walls of the room. The doctor's confused mind refused to clear itself of his fancies that now began to feed upon this new situation.

He forgot the presence of the farmer and his mind raced back over his life as a married man. The flickering light on

the wall recalled another dancing light. One afternoon in the summer during the first year after his marriage his wife Ellen had driven with him into the country. They were then furnishing their rooms, and at a farmer's house Ellen had seen an old mirror, no longer in use, standing against a wall in a shed. Because of something quaint in the design the mirror had taken her fancy and the farmer's wife had given it to her. On the drive home the young wife had told her husband of her pregnancy and the doctor had been stirred as never before. He sat holding the mirror on his knees while his wife drove, and when she announced the coming of the child she looked away across the fields.

How deeply etched, that scene in the sick man's mind! The sun was going down over young corn and oat fields beside the road. The prairie land was black and occasionally the road ran through short lanes of trees that also looked black in the waning light. The mirror on his knees caught the rays of the departing sun and sent a great ball of golden light dancing across the fields and amid the branches of trees.

Now as he stood in the presence of the farmer and as the little light from the burning match on the floor recalled that other evening of dancing light, he thought he understood the failure of his marriage and of his life. On that evening long ago when Ellen had told him of the coming of the great adventure of their marriage he had remained silent because he had thought no words he could utter would express what he felt. There had been a defense for himself built up. "I told myself she should have understood without words and I've all my life been telling myself the same thing about Mary. I've been a fool and a coward. I've always been silent because I've been afraid of expressing myself like a blundering fool. I've been a proud man and a coward.

"Tonight I'll do it. If it kills me I'll make myself talk to the girl," he said aloud, his mind coming back to the figure of his daughter.

"Hey! What's that?" asked the farm-

er, who stood with his hat in his hand waiting to tell of his mission.

V

THE doctor got his horse from Barney Smithfield's livery and drove off to the country to attend the farmer's wife, who was about to give birth to her first child. He worked desperately and the woman, who was frightened, groaned and struggled. Her husband kept coming in and going out of the room and two neighbor women appeared and stood silently about waiting to be of service. It was past ten o'clock when everything was done and the doctor was ready to depart for town.

The farmer hitched his horse and brought it to the door and he drove off feeling strangely weak and at the same time strong. How simple now seemed the thing he had yet to do. Perhaps when he got home his daughter would have gone to bed, but he would ask her to get up and come into the office. Then he would tell her the whole story of his marriage and its failure, sparing himself no humiliation.

"There was something very dear and beautiful in my Ellen and I must make Mary understand that. It will help her to be a beautiful woman," he thought, full of confidence in the strength of his resolution.

He got to the door of the livery barn at eleven o'clock and Barney Smithfield with young Duke Yetter and two other men sat talking there. The liveryman took his horse away into the darkness of the barn and the doctor stood for a moment leaning against the wall of the building. The town's night watchman stood with the group by the barn door and a quarrel broke out between him and Duke Yetter, but the doctor did not hear the hot words that flew back and forth or Duke's loud laughter at the night watchman's anger.

A queer hesitating mood had taken possession of him. There was something he passionately desired to do but could not remember. Did it have to do with his wife Ellen or Mary his daugh-

ter? The figures of the two women were again confused in his mind, and to add to the confusion there was a third figure, that of the woman he had just assisted through childbirth. Everything was confusion. He started across the street toward the entrance to the stairway leading to his office and then stopped in the road and stared about. Barney Smithfield, having returned from putting his horse in the stall, shut the door of the barn and the hanging lantern over the door swung back and forth. It threw grotesque dancing shadows down over the faces and forms of the men standing and quarreling beside the wall of the barn.

VI

MARY sat by a window in her father's office awaiting his return. So absorbed was she in her own thoughts that she was unconscious of the voice of Duke Yetter talking with the men in the street. When Duke had come into the street, the hot anger of the early part of the evening had returned and she again saw him advancing toward her in the orchard with the look of arrogant male confidence in his eyes, but presently she forgot him and thought only of her father.

An incident of her childhood returned to haunt her. One afternoon in the month of May, when she was fifteen, her father had asked her to accompany him on an evening drive into the country. The doctor went to visit a sick woman at a farmhouse five miles from town, and as there had been a great deal of rain the roads were heavy. It was dark when they reached the farmer's house, and they went into the kitchen and ate cold food off a kitchen table. For some reason her father had, on that evening, appeared boyish and almost gay. On the road he had talked a little. Even at that early age Mary had grown tall and her figure was becoming womanly. After the cold supper in the farm kitchen he walked with her around the house and she sat on a narrow porch. For a moment her father stood before

her. He put his hands into his trouser pockets and throwing back his head laughed almost heartily.

"It seems strange to think you will soon be a woman," he had said. "When you do become a woman what do you suppose is going to happen, eh? What kind of a life will you lead? What will happen to you?"

The doctor had sat on the porch beside the child and for a moment she had thought he was about to put his arm around her. Then he jumped up and went into the house leaving her to sit alone in the darkness.

As she remembered the incident, Mary remembered also that on that evening of her childhood she had met her father's advances in silence. It seemed to her that she, not her father, was to blame for the life they had led together. The farm laborer she had met on the bridge had not felt her father's coldness. That was because he had himself been warm and generous in his attitude toward the man who had cared for him in his hour of sickness and misfortune. Her father had said that the laborer knew how to be a father and Mary remembered with what warmth the two boys fishing by the creek had called to her as she went away into the darkness.

"Their father has known how to be a father because his children have known how to give themselves," she thought guiltily.

She also would give herself. Before the night had passed she would do that. On that evening long ago, and as she rode home beside her father, he had made another unsuccessful effort to break through the wall that separated them. The heavy rains had swollen the streams they had to cross, and when they had almost reached town he had stopped the horse on a wooden bridge. The horse danced nervously about and her father held the reins firmly and occasionally spoke to it. Beneath the bridge the swollen stream made a great roaring sound and beside the road in a long flat field there was a great lake of flood water. At that moment the moon had come out from

behind clouds and the wind that blew across the water made little waves. The lake of flood water was covered with dancing lights.

"I'm going to tell you about your mother and myself," her father had said huskily but at that moment the timbers of the bridge began to creak dangerously and the horse plunged forward. When her father had regained control of the frightened beast they were in the streets of the town and his diffident, silent nature had once more reasserted itself.

Mary sat in the darkness by the office window and saw her father drive into the street. When his horse had been put away he did not, as was his custom, come at once up the stairway to the office but lingered in the darkness before the barn door. Once he started to cross the street and then returned into the darkness.

Among the men who for two hours had been sitting and talking quietly, a quarrel broke out. Jack Fisher, the town night watchman, had been telling the others the story of a battle in which he had fought during the Civil War and Duke Yetter had begun bantering him. The night watchman grew angry. Grasping his nightstick he limped up and down. The loud voice of Duke Yetter cut across the shrill angry voice of the victim of his wit.

"You ought to a flanked the fellow, I tell you Jack. Yes, sir'ee, you ought to a flanked that reb and then when you got him flanked you ought to a knocked the stuffings out of the cuss! That's what I would a done" Duke shouted, laughing boisterously.

"You would a raised hell, you would," the night watchman answered, filled with ineffectual wrath.

The old soldier went off along the street followed by the laughter of Duke and his companions, and Barney Smithfield having put the doctor's horse away, came out and closed the barn door. The lantern hanging above the door swung back and forth. Doctor Cochran again started across the street and when he had reached the foot of

the stairway turned and shouted to the men.

"Good night" he called cheerfully.

A strand of hair was blown by the light summer breeze across Mary's cheek, and she jumped to her feet as though she had been touched by a hand reached out to her from the darkness.

A thousand times she had seen her father return from drives in the evening, but never before had he said anything at all to the loiterers by the barn door. She became half convinced that not her father but some other man was now coming up the stairway.

The heavy dragging footsteps rang loudly on the wooded stairs and Mary heard her father set down the little square medicine-case he always carried. The strange, cheerful, hearty mood of the man continued but his mind was in a confused riot. Mary imagined she could see his dark form in the doorway.

"The woman has had a baby," said the hearty voice from the landing outside the door. "Who did that happen to? Was it Ellen or that other woman or my little Mary?"

A stream of words, a protest came from the man's lips.

"Who's been having a baby? I want to know. Who's been having a baby? Life doesn't work out. Why are babies always being born?" he asked.

A laugh broke from the doctor's lips and his daughter leaned forward and gripped the arm of her chair.

"A baby has been born," he said again. "It's strange, eh, that my hands

should have helped a baby be born while all the time death stood at my elbow?"

Doctor Cochran stamped upon the floor of the landing.

"My feet are cold and numb from waiting for life to come out of life," he said heavily. "The woman struggled and now I must struggle."

Silence followed the stamping of feet and the tired, heavy declaration from the sick man's lips. From the street below came another loud shout of laughter from Duke Yetter.

And then Doctor Cochran fell backward down the narrow stairs to the street. There was no cry from him, just the clatter of his shoes upon the stairs and the terrible subdued sound of the body falling.

Mary did not move from her chair. With closed eyes she waited. Her heart pounded. A weakness, complete and overmastering, had possession of her and from feet to head ran little waves of feeling as though tiny creatures with soft hair-like feet were playing upon her body.

* * *

It was Duke Yetter who carried the dead man up the stairs and laid him on a bed in one of the rooms back of the office. One of the men who had been sitting with him before the door of the barn followed, lifting his hands and dropping him nervously. Between his fingers he held a forgotten cigarette, the light from which danced up and down in the darkness.



THE most disconcerting woman is not the one who tells you plainly what she thinks of you, but the one who tells other people.



Things I Forget

By David Horwitz

THE tonnage of the U. S. S. Nebraska. . . The name of the professor of economics in a Western college who has invented a substitute for currency. . . The name of the elevator boy in the Grandine Apartments, in Buffalo. . . The requirements for admission into the American College of Osteopathy at Kirksville, Missouri. . . The birthplace of Dr. Frank Crane. . . The number of hills in Rome. . . The age of my nephew. . . My wife's birthday. . . The number of opals in my sister-in-law's lavalier. . . The importance of a perpetual smile. . . The Binomial Theorem. . . The circumference of the earth. . . The cause of the late war. . . The middle name of the Yale professor who has never yet read a bad American novel. . . The story about the traveling salesman who slept one night in a farmhouse. . . The name of the artist who draws the covers for Jim Jam Jems. . . The eternal debt I owe to the men who created our state constitution.



Belated Love

By John Hall Wheelock

COME home to me, are you come home to me,
O heart of mine—but in what dolorous guise,
And the great hour—O 'twas otherwise
Love had imagined it in days to be!
These pleading hands—these lips—how dreadfully
At what strange lips and in what alien eyes
Have you sought mine, beneath what darkening skies
Come home to me at last, come home to me?

I would not know the reason: here upon
This breast of sorrows loose your aching breast;
Tell me again and yet again, and say
Still the eternal word, still babble on
Your voiceless plaint of some unhappy quest,
How in the night and storm you lost your way.



A Love Affair

By Thyra Samter Winslow

I

WHEN her mother knocked on her door, at half past seven, as she always did, Laura Morgan called a drowsy "All right, Ma, I'll get up in a minute." Then she lay in bed for twenty minutes, in a pleasant, half-asleep state and thought of Howard Bates. He seemed very close to her when she was not quite awake, as if she were still with him in the dream she had had. The remembrance of the dream, comforting and warm, still surrounded her, though she couldn't remember the details. Not that it mattered. Laura didn't "believe in dreams," though she had once had a paper-covered dream-book, in which she could look up things like daggers and handkerchiefs and learn their significance. Half-asleep was better than dreaming. She could change the dreams to suit herself, could picture Howard more plainly, his soft tumbled hair, his sleepy hazel eyes. She and Howard walking together, dancing together, kissing, even.

There was no reason for getting up promptly, anyhow. Her mother and Maud could get breakfast for her father and Philip, her brother, just as well as if she were down. Lying in bed like this was the pleasantest part of her day.

It didn't seem possible to Laura, now, that less than a year ago she and Howard had actually gone together. He had come to see her and they had sat in the always-rather-stuffy living room and had sung popular pieces, their heads close together

at the piano, or they had gone out. Howard had taken her to Perron's Drug Store for sodas and sometimes to the semi-monthly dances at Stattler's Hall or to Electric Park. He had brought her pound boxes of candy, pink and white bonbons intermingled with assorted chocolates in a blue box tied with pink ribbon. They had been to nearly every episode in "Her Twenty Dangers" which had run, two reels at a time, at the Palace Moving Picture Theatre. Howard had made love to her, had held her close as he told her good night, had kissed her. And now Howard was going with Mary Price.

Laura never knew just how it had started—Howard going with Mary. She and Howard had had some sort of an argument about nothing at all. Then Howard hadn't asked her to go to a dance at Stattler's Hall. Not wanting to stay at home, she had gone with a traveling salesman from St. Louis, a fat fellow she didn't like.

She had watched for Howard all evening. He had come in, alone, about ten, and had danced only once with her, spending most of his time smoking cigarettes on the fire-escape with some of the other boys or dancing with other girls. Mary Price hadn't been there at all. Mary Price wasn't even popular with the boys—hadn't been until Howard started going with her.

Somehow, then, Howard had lost interest in Laura. All of her little tricks hadn't helped. Mary's tricks had. He started going with Mary, instead. Laura knew Mary but not

awfully well. Mary had only been living in Morristown for a couple of years. She was a silly, giggly, clinging little thing.

Laura hated Mary. She knew Mary hated her, too. Hated and felt superior because she was "cutting her out." They pretended a great friendliness, with the over-cordiality of girls who are a little afraid or jealous. But, lately, there had been a peculiarly unpleasant smile on Mary's round face, a mixture of triumph and indifference, when they met. For, now, Howard took Mary to all of the places he had taken Laura a year before. It was just as natural in the set of which Laura was a part to say "Mary and Howard" as it had been to say "Laura and Howard" last year.

Of course Laura pretended not to care for Howard nor to care whom he went with. She felt she succeeded for no one ever teased her about him. Laura went with other men now, traveling salesmen, Morristown boys, too. She went with Joe Austin most of all because he spent money on her and took her places. But they all seemed alike, stupidly uninteresting, with little, annoying mannerisms. Even the nicest of them was nice only because of faint echoings of Howard's manner. Mostly, they were just a little better than no one at all. They showed that she could get men to be nice to her.

Not that Howard was at all remarkable. Laura knew he wasn't, knew that other girls in Morristown, outside of Mary Price, didn't seem to think much of him. But to Laura he seemed very precious. He had rather a deep, slow voice, a way of drawling the last words in sentences, a way of caressing words, even, of putting meanings into them that weren't there at all. Little things he had said were always coming back to Laura with a new poignancy, now that she didn't go with him any more.

Why had she let him go? How had she lost him? She hadn't appreciated him. It seemed impossible now—he was so very dear—and yet, a year ago he had been nice to her, telephoned her, come to see her, liked her a lot, really, didn't go with other girls at all.

There was no one else for her. The traveling men and the Morristown boys were distressingly alike. Joe Austin was her favorite only because other girls thought he was a good catch. Laura knew that she would probably never get away from Morristown. She had no special ambition or ability. The family had just enough money to get along, without the girls doing anything useful. No one would ever come to Morristown who counted. She was twenty-four and not awfully young looking, a thinnish girl with light hair who was already getting lines around her mouth and chin.

There were several boys who liked Laura, Fred Ellison and Morgan French and Joe. Joe was in love with her, actually. It always surprised Laura when she thought of it. For she never did anything to appeal to Joe. Of course when he took her to places, dances or the movies, she was nice to him, a sort of reward for his company. Lately, too, she even went through the pretence of coquetting with him if Mary or Howard were present, just to show them that she was having a good time. She had invented a sort of mask of gayety for them, a rather tremulous, shrill gayety. She wanted them to see that she was always having a good time, that she was popular, the center of things. It was hard, keeping up, when Howard wasn't there. Why did she like Howard? It seemed so silly. Howard! His mouth was rather soft and full and he had a way of raising one eyebrow with a doubting half-smile . . . his hands were the sort you want to reach out and touch, if they were near. Howard . . .

Her mother called to her, annoyed, from down stairs,

"Breakfast is all ready, now, Laura. You're a great help to me."

"Coming right away, Ma."

Laura yawned and stretched and got up, putting her bare feet into the pink hand-crocheted bed-room slippers that Julia Austin, Joe's sister, had given her at Christmas, shapeless things, never very pretty, like Julia and all the Austins. In the bathroom she bathed her face and arms and put on a blue cotton crêpe kimono, embroidered in white butterflies, over her pink cotton gown. She inserted a couple of hairpins in her hair and went down stairs to breakfast with her family.

Her mother and Maud, who was two years younger, but more pleasantly plump, were clad in starched blue morning dresses, with checked aprons over them. They looked agreeably capable as they placed the stewed fruit and oat-meal on the table. Her father and her brother, Philip, were already seated at the breakfast table.

Laura sat down, smiled a mechanical "good morning" and took her napkin from the plated-silver napkin ring with her initials on it. The Morgans had clean napkins twice a week.

"Isn't she the merry little sunshine!" Philip ventured.

"Let me alone," said Laura, and her voice trembled. "If you'd been awake half the night with a headache you'd be grumpy, too."

Philip subsided.

Her father looked at her over his glasses.

"Been having a lot of headaches lately, it seems to me," he said. "Running around too much to dances. If you get to bed some night before twelve, you might wake up in a better humour."

Laura didn't answer. She wanted to scream out, to tell them that her head didn't ache at all but that they annoyed her and bored her terribly,

that she didn't want to talk to them, that all she wanted was Howard Bates, wanted him there, with her now, always.

She finished her breakfast. The two men left. Maud and her mother, in a pleasant buzz of conversation, cleared off the table, began putting around the dining-room, putting it in order.

"I'll dust the living-room," Laura volunteered. She had to do something, she knew. She could be alone, there.

It couldn't be true—and yet last night at a dance at Miller's Hall there were rumours that Mary and Howard were engaged.

Engaged! If Mary once got him—if the engagement were announced—she had lost him, then. She had lost him anyhow. Of course. Lost him. It didn't seem possible. Howard!

In the living-room she threw herself down on the couch, buried her head in a cushion. There, on that couch, Howard had first kissed her. She stretched out her hand along the back of it. How many times she had found his hand there. And Howard was going to marry Mary Price. She wanted to scream out, to stop things, some way. She didn't know what to do.

She got up and dusted the living-room. On the upright piano was a pile of popular songs with garish covers, torn. Some of those songs Howard had sung to her—had brought to her. Howard didn't have a very good voice, just deep and pleasant. She had liked hearing him sing because it was him singing. His hair, soft and always mussed looking . . . his hands. . . . And now he was going to marry Mary. She had tried hard enough . . . everything she knew.

She didn't believe much in prayers—nor in God—since she was grown up. She had often shocked her family and her friends by declaring her unbelief in any god at all.

Yet, now, suddenly, she threw herself on her knees, in front of the couch, and buried her head in the seat cushion.

"Oh, God," she groaned, "send Howard back to me. Make him love me! I—I haven't asked for much. I haven't got much. He is all I want. I don't care . . . I want him—please, God."

She got to her feet feeling a little better. Maybe it was just a rumour, after all. How would Nettie Sayer know? It was Nettie who had told her. Why, even now, Howard might be thinking of her, deciding that he loved her and not Mary, after all. How could he love Mary, after all the good times they had had together, little things, jokes, his kisses?

Laura finished dusting the living-room with a little flourish, even. Why, anything might happen.

Her mother and Maud were in the kitchen. She joined them there, listening for half an hour to their conversation, joining in, finally. Wasn't Maud silly? If only there were someone she could talk to about things. But Maud—her mother—they didn't know, couldn't feel things the way she did. Howard!

He might be going to ring her up. Why, yes, maybe he would telephone her. For an instant she forgot that she had thought that same thing for a long time, months, now. This was different. She had heard of the engagement. She had prayed. Things couldn't go on.

Howard worked in his father's store. It was a musty store that dealt mostly in leather and saddles but included some hardware. Laura didn't like it. It was a hard store to find excuses for going into. But he could telephone her from there, any time. Why, she used to telephone him there, lots of times. He got down town about nine. It was ten, now. He'd been there an hour, more than likely.

"I think I'll go up and dress," she

said. "I promised Myrtle Turner I'd attend to those programs for the Ladies' Aid Benefit and get a proof for the meeting tomorrow."

Her mother and Maud nodded mechanically. What difference did anything make to them?

II

LAURA bathed and dressed rather rapidly, in a sort of a fever, listening all the while for the telephone to ring. It did not ring. After she had dressed and put on her neat blue coat and tan velvet hat, she made a pretense of talking with Maud. If Howard did telephone, she didn't want to miss him. Then she had a feeling, suddenly, of wanting to be out of the house.

She hurried down town, the business street that stretched out from the Brick Church to the railroad depot. Just off this street she stopped into a grimy little print shop and received smudged copies of the Ladies' Aid Benefit program. That was all her errand consisted of. She had nothing else to do down town.

She must see Howard, of course. She invented half a dozen errands that took her past Watt's Harness and Leather Store, with its hideous imitation horse of dappled gray in one window. She did not see Howard, though she peered in, eagerly, as she passed. She must see him! Once she fancied she did see him. What a dark store it was.

She had bought everything she could think of, down town. She had talked to half a dozen people, making the conversation last as long as possible, giggling whenever she could giggle. She had accepted an invitation to go to the movies later in the week with Mark Henry, had promised to dance with Archie Miller at the next dance at Stattler's Hall. She couldn't go home without seeing Howard.

She walked past the store again. Her steps dragged. She looked in-

side. She did not see him. She must go in—find a pretext for going in. What could she get? She had thought of everything so many times. She must go in.

Her hand was on the door. She was inside the store.

Ray Davenport, the clerk, a sprightly young fellow, came up to her. Had she wasted this chance, coming in—and not seeing Howard?

She knew Ray and smiled at him. She couldn't ask for Howard, now.

"Have you any—any of those new ice-scrappers?" she asked. "Not the kind you chop ice with but the kind that scrapes it, you know, with lots of teeth, into a sort of little cup."

"I don't think so," Ray hesitated. "You don't mean this kind?"

He walked back of the counter, took something from a dusty bin and held it out to her.

"Oh, no, we've got one like that—"

In the back of the store was an office, with partitions just high enough so you could see who was there. Inside, now, was Howard!

She hesitated. Then,

"Hello, Howard," Laura called, prettily.

Howard Bates looked up, came out of the office toward her. As he came she grew almost dizzy, held tightly to her black leather purse. How lovely he looked—he was dearer than she had thought him. He looked tired, a trifle thin, even, and pale. His dark hair was disheveled. Howard—why—he had gone with her—had been hers—hers to love, once. . . .

She smiled nervously as he came up to her, and held out her hand. She wanted to keep his hand in her own, to run her hand over his face, to put her fingers though his hair, on his lips, as she once had done. She felt that she could have stopped loving him, quite without trouble, if his mouth had been different. Or his hair—or his eyes.

"I'm hunting for an ice-shaver,"

she told him. "I've been making a sort of a new drink we're all awfully fond of—folks say it's good, but they are probably just being polite about it—and the ice has got to be shaved. The other night one of the boys nearly broke his finger with our ice pick—Jerome Farmer—it's taken it nearly a week to heal. So I thought if I could get another kind—"

Jerome Farmer was the banker's son—awfully popular. He had called, had hurt his finger on an ice pick. She'd let Howard see that she didn't sit at home and wait for him, anyhow.

He was sorry. He didn't have the ice-shaver she wanted. How was every little thing? Going to the dance, Wednesday? He'd see her then. Before, maybe. . . .

What could she say? She had said everything she knew how to say, weeks before.

She was out on the street. Howard hadn't said anything she hoped he would.

She walked home slowly. She was angry, now, at herself. Why had she gone in the store at all? Wouldn't he know that she was running after him? He hadn't mentioned Mary, either. Maybe they weren't engaged, after all. Hadn't she prayed to God—?

At home, she took off her serge dress and got into her kimono again. Her mother and sister were not at home. Curled up in the biggest living-room chair she read all of the stories in her favourite magazine. She stopped in between stories to think about Howard. Sometimes she read a whole page before she realized that she didn't know a word she had read. Why had she gone to see him? Still, she wouldn't have got to see him at all if she hadn't gone. What did he see in Mary? A little thing like that! Why couldn't she get him back again? She was as pretty as Mary, as clever, as nice in every way. Maybe—still—hadn't she prayed for him?

She read, listening for the telephone.

At five o'clock the telephone rang. A masculine voice asked for her. She trembled, though she knew it was not Howard. It was Joe Austin. She had an engagement with him for that evening. He telephoned to ask if she would prefer going to a vaudeville show to staying at home.

"Let's stay at home for a change," she said, and wondered why she said it. Usually, she wanted to be going places every minute. "I've been out late every night for a week. I've got to get some sleep. I'll be awfully glad to see you, though, Joe. Around eight."

Half an hour later her mother came home and then Maud. There were meat cakes for dinner and she did not like them. She had not had any lunch. She went without lunch frequently.

Dinner was the usual meal. The family laughed over the day's events. She laughed, too, even permitted Philip to tease her when she said that Joe Austin was coming to call.

"Why doesn't he take the spare room?" Philip tried. "He's here enough. Though he isn't here much for dinner. You got to hand it to Joe. He takes you places. He isn't one of these home comforts and mealers like Howard Bates used to be, coming in just before we sat down at the table."

"Is that so?" asked Laura.

Yet she was not angry. She was really happy when, under any circumstances, Howard's name was brought into the conversation.

After dinner she dressed again, putting on a cheap pink frock that had done duty as a dance dress before it lost its freshness. She did her hair over, puffing it out around her ears. Her face was getting thin. She must stop worrying about things. Why, she really looked more than her age. Little fat things like Mary Price always looked younger than they really were—fooled men. She

added an extra bit of rouge and powder. What did it matter? She wouldn't see Howard.

At eight, Joe Austin came. Maud was spending the evening with some girl friends. The rest of the family always stayed in the dining-room when the girls had company so, as usual, Laura had the living-room for her young man and herself. He came laden with a large box of candy, the chocolate creams already hardened by age. Laura greeted it with extravagant praise and made a pretence of feeding him the first piece.

What a tiresome fellow Joe was! She looked at him critically. Stupid. He had light hair that was rather uneven, the sort that can't be brushed quite smooth, but it lacked the softness of Howard's. Already it was starting to recede. Worse than that, there was a thin place on the back of his head. Yet Joe wasn't more than twenty-six or so, about Howard's age. He was much richer than Howard. His father owned the Austin House, the second best hotel in town, the one frequented by commercial travelers and theatrical companies, people like that.

Joe was a sort of manager and clerk, and no doubt would take over the hotel when his father died. He was more citified than Howard. He went up to Chicago two or three times a year. He wore better fitting clothes, with little fancy touches to them in lapels and pockets. Howard wore awfully plain things, always in need of pressing, always smelling slightly of tobacco—lovely things—

Joe was rather dapper, even. "Good company," most people called him. He knew a lot of vaudeville jokes and, in a crowd, could always say something to get applause. Howard wasn't much fun in a crowd. Howard!

Joe was telling a long anecdote, now. As Laura looked at him, she wondered why she allowed him to call, why he liked her, anyhow. His nose was a trifle too short, turned up

just a little. His face was a little too thin. There were slight lines in his cheeks. Howard was thin, too,—a different thinness. Joe was so stupid and talky and useless. Why, if he died that minute it wouldn't matter. He had no force, no personality. Yet he was more popular, more of a catch than Howard. She knew that. Perhaps that, really, was the reason she kept on going with him. What a bore he was! Should she keep on letting him call, talking to him?

The telephone rang. Almost rudely Laura rushed from the room to answer it. The telephone stood on a little table in the hall. She had hoped. . . . The voice was Rosalie Breen's.

"Have you heard the news?" she wanted to know. After the usual hesitation she went on, "I thought maybe you had. You are one of the people she was going to call up. Mary Price and Howard Bates. What do you think of that? She just 'phoned me. I guess she'll 'phone you right away, too. She's having us all in tomorrow night, a little party. I heard it last night at the dance. Did you? Howard was one of your old flames, once, wasn't he, Laura?"

"Oh, I didn't mind him hanging around before I—I—had someone else." Laura managed to say. She managed a giggle, too.

III

So, Howard was engaged. Well, that was settled. Gone! She might as well wipe him off her slate. She knew Howard. She could never get him back, now. She could never mean anything at all to him. Ever. Something went out. Life was grayer, would always be grayer. Things didn't seem to matter as much. Maybe things had never mattered, anyhow. Of course she'd get over it. People got over things like that in years. Years. To keep on living. . . . And she had prayed to God. God!

She told Joe. They talked about that, other things. Howard gone! Joe was talking. She giggled over his stories. She found she couldn't giggle any more. She lapsed into silence. What did Joe matter? What if she never saw him again? What did anything matter? Joe—well, he was the nicest man she knew—now. A better catch than Howard. Mary knew that. Why of course. Mary would have been glad to have gone with Joe. Why, Mary had made up to Joe. He thought her a stupid little thing. She was, too. Joe! After all, why not? It was better than no one at all, than letting people ask her about Howard.

She went over and sat next to Joe on the couch. She rested her hand, carelessly, near his hand. She leaned toward him just a little. She was glad her dress was rather low. She looked rather nice, that way.

"I feel so nervous, Joe," she said, "I don't know why. A sort of a mood. Why, I believe I'm trembling. Feel my hand."

She held out one hand to him.

"Not an excuse for me to play hands with you, Laura?"

"You old silly. Don't you know me better than that?"

"Bet I do. What's the matter?"

"I don't know. I just felt sort of—sad. Don't you get that way, sometimes?"

"Not when a girl as nice as you lets me hold her hand. I say, Laura . . ."

"Now, Joe," giggled Laura, and pulled her hand away. Holding Joe's hand gave her as much emotion as holding Maud's hand—or the cat's paw.

"I don't know what's the matter with me," she said, and sighed.

"Now, now," said Joe, and gave her shoulder little pats. "Cheer up and tell papa what's wrong."

She laughed at that and put one hand over his hand as it lay on her shoulder.

"You're a dear little girl," Joe said,

"if I only thought you really liked me, Laura . . ."

Half an hour later he had his arms around her, was telling her he loved her, had asked her to marry him.

Engaged to Joe! The years stretched out indefinitely, without colour. Why not? She couldn't be unengaged—unmarried—all her life. She couldn't let Mary laugh at her—or Howard. Now, Howard couldn't laugh. Why, Howard had been jealous of Joe Austin, one time. She'd show them—show Howard and Mary. She didn't need Howard. Howard's father was stingy. Mary wouldn't have nearly as much as she could have. She could have a new house—or stay at the hotel and have no work at all, if she liked . . . clothes, city things, trips . . . she'd have a big wedding, too, bigger than the Prices could afford.

The telephone rang again.

"Answer it, won't you, Joe?" she begged, prettily.

Joe answered it, came back in half a minute.

"It's for you—Mary Price to break the big news," he said.

"Want to go to her house, tomorrow night?"

"Sure thing."

"Shall I tell her—about us?"

"Go ahead, spring it. She's not the only one with news. Good stuff. Give 'em something else to think about."

She was at the telephone.

Mary was pleasantly polite.

"I'm having a few friends in tomorrow night . . . Howard and I—"

"Just heard it, dear," said Laura, "I'm awfully glad. And just for that—here's something for you—you're the first I've told. Joe and I have just decided the same thing. Must be in the air. Thanks. Yes . . . isn't it? Won't it be fun . . . lots of parties and things, together. I'm so excited. Aren't you? You've got my very, very best wishes. Congratulate Howard for me, won't you? I certainly know how lucky you are, too. Howard is a fine fellow—one of the nicest boys I know. You know, I used to go with Howard a little . . . before—I—I knew Joe. Yes—isn't it fine? Thanks . . . we'll both be delighted. See you tomorrow evening . . ."

Howard! With a smile on her lips, Laura went back into the living-room to her fiancé.



Patience

By Marx G. Sabel

CERTAINLY, my darling, you are right.

What you say goes.

Once I had my doubts about it,

Thinking

"No. She's wrong!"

But then I thought,

"Well, say she's wrong, what then?"

She can't be wrong very long in this world."

Girls

By Nick Grinde

I

Lucia

LUCIA was plump and spoke with a Milwaukee accent.

She leaned toward velvet and red and feather fans.

The most delicate complexion in the world; and dimples.

No romance came out, but much went in. A perfect blotter.

Had two jokes and sprang them without warning. No embarrassment, however, as she always laughed, and never noticed whether you did or not.

She loved pop-corn.

Would hold hands if the situation warranted. Not very clever with men, though very appealing. They left soon. She never knew why and I never could tell her. If she had got tired before they had, they would have liked her a lot.

She was much too healthy for social conquest; she was condemned to stay in the wholesome field.

She married a man from Milwaukee, and they live in Milwaukee, and the three children are going to a Milwaukee school.

II

Alice

No one is willing to pay for salt in a restaurant, and yet everyone wants it on his food.

No one ever thought of bringing Alice to a party and yet everyone wanted her there. She was a great asset to any affair and yet too much of a problem for individual responsibility. She usually attracted men platonically.

S. S.—July—5

She was stunning, clear thinking, caustic, extreme in her severe black and white effects.

A great mixer and a great fixer. Willing to work for and to plan social events.

Lived a great deal in her past. Always mentioning the good times she had had. That kept her from getting the most out of the current one until the time came to tell about it. Then it blossomed very convincingly under the magic warmth of her memory until she herself believed it.

She never really lived the present. She was forever going to house parties and talking college, and to colleges talking of house parties.

She was engaged to several men, but somehow they quickly hurdled from her future into her past.

She is teaching school now, and I'm sure she doesn't like it.

Before long the future will lose its possibilities and if the present doesn't snap into focus, the past will have to carry the burden alone.

III

Peggy

Peggy I met in San Francisco. She was young and wistfully beautiful. Brown hair and brown eyes. She was immediately loved by nineteen out of every twenty men.

Somewhere along the path of life she had got in bad. She had a distorted slant on everything. Her reasoning was astounding and her logic fatal.

She was passionate or cold at will. She was truthful or deceitful. Loving and sweet or very tricky. Thoroughly unreliable.

She blamed a distant father-in-law and an early marriage for everything, though I imagine she hadn't given her domestic life a chance. It seemed perfectly natural to her to put the blame for everything on somebody else.

She spoke of her family, but they never materialized—it seems that they traveled most of the time. She had snapshots of a house-party taken in bathing at Salt Lake, but she didn't remember the names of most of the guests. She mentioned living in Denver and was sure of the name of the Brown Palace Hotel; she had also lived in Chicago—on the East Side she thought they called it, or was it the South, anyway it was near that big hotel that everybody goes to—what is the name of it anyway?

What was she doing here? Well, you see, her uncle sent her an allowance—he was a very rich man. He hadn't sent it this month though—she wondered what was the matter; and the rent was due tomorrow.

She gave me her picture the day I met her. On it she wrote: "*Je t'aime*." She wasn't sure about the apostrophe, so she put in two of them. I told her that I loved her too; neither of us smiled, and neither of us was fooled.

Our friendship lasted about three weeks—we both worked fast. One day she dug a letter out of her trunk. It was written from France by a captain who was subsequently killed.

It was without doubt the most marvelous love letter I had ever read or could imagine. It had the true ring that a real man who had had a wonderful mother could convey only to an ideal.

She said, "I wonder what the poor nut thought he was getting away with; why, he never even tried to kiss me."

IV

Betsey

The momentum of birth threw Betsey into the midst of things. She was one

of those people who just couldn't be left out. She belonged because her family had always belonged.

When it was being decided on who should be chosen, elected, or invited, you always said, "Well, Betsey of course, and, let's see, so-and-so would be just the type we really want."

She was the meat and potatoes around which later were gathered the artichokes and olives and strawberries. Her fate was always settled before it came to an issue, something like a crown prince's.

All of her ancestors had lived by their brains—not wits—brains—professors and ministers mostly. She got it by inheritance and environment.

She couldn't make a perfect contact with anybody.

The other fellows had to do a monologue if they were to achieve anything but a book review. You could never argue with her because she was always right.

If you admired a gorgeous bed of flowers, she mentioned, in an honest effort to enliven the conversation, that the pollen was carried by butterflies and moths; and she didn't call them "dear little butterflies" either—she reverted to Latin for conversational ease.

The mention of anything physical, from love to tennis, had value to her only as a mental excursion and not because of any intrinsic worth that the subject might have had.

Both sides of her nose were shiny, and her petticoat showed in the back.

Her extreme efficiency missed out in being her one redeeming asset because it failed artistically. The machinery showed through. There was no astonishment at a sudden result, with the consequent credit-giving wonder. You knew just how she accomplished her ends.

As far as I can see she is a permanent institution and may be relied upon thoroughly.

The Jewel Merchants*

[A One-act Play]

By James Branch Cabell

THE CHARACTERS:

GRACIOSA: *Daughter of Balthazar Valori.*

GUIDO: *A jewel merchant.*

ALESSANDRO DE MEDICI: *Duke of Florence.*

THE play begins with a song, to the accompaniment of a lute.

SONG:†

Let me have dames and damsels richly clad
To feed and tend my mirth,
Singing by day and night to make me glad.

Let me have fruitful gardens of great girth
Filled with the strife of birds,
With water-springs and beasts that house i' the earth.

Let me seem Solomon for lore of words
Samson for strength, for beauty Absalom.

Knights as my serfs be given;
And as I will, let music go and come,
Till, when I will, I will to enter Heaven.

The curtain rises upon a corner of Balthazar Valori's garden near the northern border of Tuscany. The garden is walled. There is a shrine in the wall: the tortured figure upon the crucifix is conspicuous. To the right a stone bench: by mounting from the seat to the top of the bench it is possible to scale the wall. To the left a crimson pennant on a high pole shows against the sky. The period is 1533.

Graciosa sits on the bench with a lute. There is a call. Smiling, she answers this call by striking her lute. She pats straight her hair and gown, and puts aside the instrument. Guido appears at the top of the wall.

GUIDO

Ah, madonna. . .

GRACIOSA

Welcome, Ser Guido. Your journey has been brief.

GUIDO

It has not seemed brief to me.

GRACIOSA

Why, it was only three days ago you told me it would be a fortnight before you came this way again.

GUIDO

Yes, but I did not then know that each day spent apart from you, Madonna Graciosa, would be a century in passing.

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†Adapted from Rossetti's translation.

GRACIOSA

Dear me, but your search must have been desperate!

GUIDO

Yes, my search is desperate.

GRACIOSA

Did you find gems worthy of your search?

GUIDO

Very certainly, since at my journey's end I find Madonna Graciosa, the chief jewel of Tuscany.

GRACIOSA

Such compliments, Guido, make your speech less like a merchant's than a courtier's.

GUIDO

Ah, well, to balance that, you will presently find courtiers in Florence who will barter for you like merchants. May I descend?

GRACIOSA

Yes, if you have something of interest to show me.

GUIDO

Am I to be welcomed merely for the sake of my gems? You were more gracious, you were more beautifully like your lovely name, on the fortunate day that I first encountered you . . . only six weeks ago, and only yonder, where the path crosses the highway. But now that I esteem myself your friend, you greet me like a stranger. You do not even invite me into your garden. I much prefer the manner in which you told me the way to the inn when I was an unknown passer-by. And yet your pennant promised greeting.

GRACIOSA

Ah, Guido, I flew it the very minute the boy from the inn brought me your message!

GUIDO

Now, there is the greeting I had hoped for! But how do you escape your father's watch so easily?

GRACIOSA

My father has no need to watch me in this lonely hill castle. Ever since I can remember I have wandered at will in the forest. My father knows that to me every path is as familiar as one of the corridors in his house; and in no one of them did I ever meet anybody except charcoal-burners, and sometimes a nun from the convent, and—oh, yes!—you. But descend, friend Guido.

GUIDO

(Climbing down, with his pack.) That "Oh, yes, you!" is a very fitting reward for my devotion. For I find that nowadays I travel about the kingdom buying jewels less for my patrons at court than for the pleasure of having your eyes appraise them, and smile at me.

GRACIOSA

(With the condescension of a great lady.) Guido, you have in point of fact been very kind to me, and very amusing too, in my loneliness on the top of this hill. See, here is the turquoise I had from you the second time you passed. I wear it always—secretly.

GUIDO

That is wise, for the turquoise is a talisman. They say that the woman who wears a turquoise is thereby assured of marrying the person whom she prefers.

GRACIOSA

I do not know about that, nor do I expect to have much choice as to what rich nobleman marries me, but I know that I love this turquoise—

GUIDO

In fact, it is a handsome stone.

GRACIOSA

Because it reminds me constantly of the hours which I have spent here with my lute—

GUIDO

Oh, with your lute!

GRACIOSA

And with your pack of lovely jewels—

GUIDO

Yes, to be sure! with my jewels.

GRACIOSA

And with you.

GUIDO

There is again my gracious lady. Now, in reward for that, you shall feast your eyes.

GRACIOSA

(*All eagerness.*) And what have you to-day?

(*Guido opens his pack. She bends above it with hands outstretched.*)

GUIDO

(*Taking out a necklace.*) For one thing, pearls, black pearls, set with a clasp of emeralds. See! They will become you.

GRACIOSA

(*Taking them, pressing them to her cheek.*) How cool! But I—poor child of a poor noble—I cannot afford such.

GUIDO

Oh, I did not mean to offer them to you to-day. No, this string is intended for the Duke's favorite, Count Eglamore.

GRACIOSA

(*Stiffening.*) Count Eglamore! These are for him?

GUIDO

For Count Eglamore.

GRACIOSA

Has the upstart such taste?

GUIDO

If it be taste to appreciate pearls, then the Duke's chief officer has excellent taste. He seeks them far and wide. He will be very generous in paying for this string.

GRACIOSA

I am sorry to learn that this Eglamore is among your patrons.

GUIDO

Oh, the nobles complain of him, but we merchants have no quarrel with Eglamore. He buys too lavishly.

GRACIOSA

Do you think only of buying and selling, Guido?

GUIDO

It is a pursuit not limited to us who frankly live by sale and purchase. Count Eglamore, for example, knows that men may be bought as readily as merchandise. It is one reason why he is so hated—by the unbought.

GRACIOSA

(*Irritated by the title.*) Count Eglamore, indeed! I ask in my prayers every night that some honest gentleman may contrive to cut the throat of this abominable creature.

GUIDO

(*His hand going to his throat.*) You pray too much, madonna. Even very pious people ought to be reasonable.

GRACIOSA

(*Rising.*) Have I not reason to hate the man who killed my kinsman?

GUIDO

(*Rising.*) The Marquis of Cibo conspired, or so the court judged—

GRACIOSA

I know nothing of the judgment. But it was this Eglamore who discovered the plot, if there indeed was any plot, and who sent my cousin Cibo to a death—(*pointing to the shrine*)—oh, to a death as horrible as that. So I hate him.

GUIDO

Yet you have never even seen him, I believe?

GRACIOSA

And it would be better for him never

to see me or any of my kin. My father, my uncles and my cousins have all sworn to kill him—

GUIDO

So I have gathered. They remain among the unbought.

GRACIOSA

(*Returning, sits upon the bench, and speaks regretfully.*) But they have never any luck. Cousin Pietro contrived to have a beam dropped on Eglamore's head, and it missed him by not half a foot—

GUIDO

Ah, yes, I remember.

GRACIOSA

And Cousin Georgio stabbed him in the back one night, but the coward had on chain-armor under his finery—

GUIDO

I remember that also.

GRACIOSA

And Uncle Lorenzo poisoned his soup, but a pet dog got at it first. That was very unfortunate.

GUIDO

Yes, the dog seemed to think so, I remember.

GRACIOSA

However, perseverance is always rewarded. So I still hope that one or another of my kinsmen will contrive to kill this Eglamore before I go to court.

GUIDO

(*Sits at her feet.*) Has my Lord Balthazar yet set a day for that presentation?

GRACIOSA

Not yet.

GUIDO

I wish to have this Eglamore's accounts all settled by that date.

GRACIOSA

But in three months, Guido, I shall

be sixteen. My sisters went to court when they were sixteen.

GUIDO

In fact, a noble who is not rich cannot afford to continue supporting a daughter who is salable in marriage.

GRACIOSA

No, of course not. (*Slips down, and sits by him on the ground.*) Do you think I shall make as good a match as my sisters, Guido? Do you think some great rich nobleman will marry me very soon? And shall I like the court? What shall I see there?

GUIDO

Marvels. I think—yes, I am afraid that you will like them.

GRACIOSA

And Duke Alessandro—shall I like him?

GUIDO

Few courtiers have expressed dislike of him in my presence.

GRACIOSA

Do you like him? Does he too buy lavishly?

GUIDO

Eh, madonna! some day, when you have seen his jewels—

GRACIOSA

Oh! I shall see them when I go to court?

GUIDO

Yes, he will show them to you, I think, without fail, for the Duke loves beauty in all its forms. So he will take pleasure in confronting the brightness of your eyes with the brightness of the four kinds of sapphires, of the twelve kinds of rubies, and of many extraordinary pearls—

GRACIOSA

(*With eyes shining, and lips parted.*) Oh!

GUIDO

And you will see his famous emerald necklace, and all his diamonds, and his huge turquoises, which will make you ashamed of your poor talisman—

GRACIOSA

He will show all these jewels to me!

GUIDO

(*Looking at her, and still smiling thoughtfully.*) He will show you the very finest of his gems, assuredly. And then, worse still, he will be making verses in your honor.

GRACIOSA

It would be droll to have a great duke making songs about me!

GUIDO

It is a preposterous feature of Duke Alessandro's character that he is always making songs about some beautiful thing or another.

GRACIOSA

Such strange songs, Guido! I was singing over one of them just before you came,—

Let me have dames and damsels richly clad
To feed and tend my mirth,
Singing by day and night to make me glad—

But I could not quite understand it.
Are his songs thought good?

GUIDO

The songs of a reigning duke are always good.

GRACIOSA

And is he as handsome as people report?

GUIDO

Tastes differ, of course—

GRACIOSA

And is he—?

GUIDO

I have a portrait of the Duke. It does not, I think, unduly flatter him. Will you look at it?

GRACIOSA

Yes, yes!

GUIDO

(*Drawing out a miniature on a chain.*) Here is the likeness.

GRACIOSA

But how should you—?

GUIDO

(*Seeing her surprise.*) Oh, it was a gift to me from his highness for a special service I did him, and as such, must be treasured.

GRACIOSA

Perhaps, then, I shall see you at court, Messer Guido, who are the friend of princes?

GUIDO

If you do, I ask only that in noisy Florence you remember this quiet garden.

GRACIOSA

(*Looks at him silently, then glances at the portrait. She speaks with evident disappointment.*) Is this the Duke?

GUIDO

You may see his arms on it, and on the back his inscription.

GRACIOSA

Yes, but—(*looking at the portrait again*)—but . . . he is . . . so . . .

GUIDO

You are astonished at his highness' coloring? That he inherits from his mother. She was, you know, a black-amoor.

GRACIOSA

And my sisters wrote me he was like a god!

GUIDO

Such observations are court etiquette.

GRACIOSA

(*With an outburst of disgust.*) Take it back! Though how can you bear to

look at it, far less to have it touching you! And only yesterday I was angry because I had not seen the Duke riding past!

GUIDO

Seen him! here! riding past!

GRACIOSA

Old Ursula told me that the Duke had gone by with twenty men, riding down toward the convent at the border. And I flung my sewing-bag straight at her head because she had not called me.

GUIDO

That was idle gossip, I fancy. The Duke rarely rides abroad without my—*(he stops)*—without my lavish patron Eglamore, the friend of all honest merchants.

GRACIOSA

But that abominable Eglamore may have been with him. I heard nothing to the contrary.

GUIDO

True, madonna, true. I had forgotten you did not see them.

GRACIOSA

No. What is he like, this Eglamore? Is he as appalling to look at as the Duke?

GUIDO

Madonna! but wise persons do not apply such adjectives to dukes. And wise persons do not criticise Count Eglamore's appearance, either, now that Eglamore is indispensable to the all-powerful Duke of Florence.

GRACIOSA

Indispensable?

GUIDO

It is thanks to the Eglamore whom you hate that the Duke has ample leisure to indulge in recreations which are reputed to be—curious.

GRACIOSA

I do not understand you, Guido.

GUIDO

That is perhaps quite as well. *(Attempting to explain as much as is decently expressible.)* To be brief, madonna, business annoys the Duke.

GRACIOSA

Why?

GUIDO

It interferes with the pursuit of all the beautiful things he asks for in that song.

GRACIOSA

But how does that make Eglamore indispensable?

GUIDO

Eglamore is an industrious person who affixes seals, and signs treaties, and musters armies, and collects revenues, upon the whole, quite as efficiently as Alessandro would be capable of doing these things.

GRACIOSA

So Duke Alessandro merely makes verses?

GUIDO

And otherwise amuses himself as his inclinations prompt, while Eglamore rules Tuscany—and the Tuscans are none the worse off on account of it. But is not that a horseman?

GRACIOSA

(Standing on the bench, looking over the wall.) A solitary rider, far down by the convent, so far away that he seems hardly larger than a scarlet dragon-fly.

GUIDO

I confess I wish to run no risk of being found here, by your respected father or by your ingenious cousins and uncles.

GRACIOSA

(She remains standing upon the bench.) I think your Duke is much more dangerous looking than any of them. Heigho! I can quite foresee that

I shall never fall in love with this Duke.

GUIDO

A prince has means to overcome all obstacles.

GRACIOSA

No. It is unbefitting and a little cowardly for Duke Alessandro to shirk the duties of his station for verse-making and eternal pleasure-seeking. Now if I were duke—

GUIDO

What would you do?

GRACIOSA

If I were duke? Oh . . . I would grant my father a pension . . . and I would have Eglamore hanged . . . and I would purchase a new gown of silvery green—

GUIDO

In which you would be very ravishingly beautiful.

GRACIOSA

(*Sitting on bench.*) And that is all I can think of. What would you do if you were duke, Messer Guido?

GUIDO

I? What would I do if I were a great lord instead of a tradesman? (*Softly.*) I think you know the answer, madonna.

GRACIOSA

Oh, you would make me your duchess, of course. That is quite understood. But I was speaking seriously, Guido.

GUIDO

And is it not a serious matter that a pedler of crystals should have dared to love a nobleman's daughter?

GRACIOSA

(*Delighted.*) This is the first I have heard of it.

GUIDO

But you are perfectly right. It is not a serious matter. That I worship you

is an affair which does not seriously concern any person save me in any way whatsoever. Yet I think that knowledge of the fact would put your father to the trouble of sharpening his dagger.

GRACIOSA

Ye-es. But not even Father would deny that you were showing excellent taste.

GUIDO

Indeed, I am not certain that I do worship you; for in order to adore whole-heartedly the idolater must believe his idol to be perfect. (*Taking her hand.*) Now your nails are of an ugly shape, like that of little fans. Your nose is nothing to boast of. And your mouth is too large. I do not admire these faults, for faults they are undoubtedly—

GRACIOSA

Do they make me very ugly? I know that I have not a really good mouth, Guido, but do you think it is positively repulsive?

GUIDO

No. . . . Then, too, I know that you are vain and self-seeking, and look forward contentedly to the time when your father will transfer his ownership of your physical attractions to that nobleman who offers the highest price for them.

GRACIOSA

But we daughters of the poor Valori are compelled to marry—suitably. We have only the choice between that and the convent yonder.

GUIDO

That is true, and nobody disputes it. Still, you participate in a monstrous bargain, and I would prefer to have you exhibit distaste for it.

(*GUIDO contemplates his pearls. Graciosa looks at him for a moment, rises, draws a deep breath, and speaks with a sort of humility.*)

GRACIOSA

And to what end, Guido? What good would weeping do?

GUIDO

(*Smiling whimsically.*) I am afraid that men do not always love according to the strict laws of logic. (*Rises, and follows her.*) I desire your happiness above all things, yet to see you so abysmally untroubled by anything which troubles me is—another matter.

GRACIOSA

But I am not untroubled, Guido.

GUIDO

No?

GRACIOSA

No. (*Rather tremulously.*) Sometimes I sit here dreading my life at court. I want never to leave my father's bleak house. I fear that I may not like the man who offers the highest price for me. And it seems as if the court were a horrible painted animal, dressed in bright silks, and shining with jewels, and waiting to devour me.

(*The head and shoulders of the DUKE are visible above the wall. The two in the garden are oblivious of his presence. The DUKE looks from one to the other. His eyes narrow, his teeth are displayed in a wide grin; he now understands the situation. He lowers his head as GUIDO moves.*)

GRACIOSA

No, I am not untroubled. For I cannot fathom you, and that troubles me. I am very fond of you—and yet I do not trust you.

GUIDO

You know that I love you.

GRACIOSA

You tell me so. It pleases me to have you say it—

GUIDO

Madonna is candid this morning.

GRACIOSA

Yes, I am candid. It does please me. And I know that for the sake of seeing me you endanger your life, for if my father heard of our meetings here he would have you killed.

GUIDO

Would I incur such risks without caring?

GRACIOSA

No,—and yet, somehow, I do not believe it is altogether for me that you care.

(*The DUKE laughs. GUIDO starts, half drawing his dagger. GRACIOSA turns with an instinctive gesture of seeking protection. The DUKE's head and shoulders appear above the wall.*)

THE DUKE

And you will find, my friend, that the most charming women have just these awkward intuitions.

(*The DUKE ascends the wall, while the two stand motionless and silent. When he is on top of the wall, GUIDO comes forward and obsequiously assists him to descend. The DUKE hands first his gloves, then his scarlet cloak to GUIDO, who takes them as a servant would attend his master.*)

THE DUKE

(*Sits upon bench.*) Yes, madonna, I suspect that Eglamore here cares greatly for the fact that you are Balthazar Valori's daughter, and cousin to the late Marquis of Cibo.

GRACIOSA

Eglamore!

THE DUKE

For Cibo left many kinsmen. These still resent the circumstance that the matching of his wits against Eglamore's wits earned for Cibo an unpleasantly public death-bed. So they pursue their feud against Eglamore with vexatious industry. And Eglamore goes about in hourly apprehension of another falling beam, another knife thrust in the back, or another plate of poison.

GRACIOSA

Eglamore!

THE DUKE

(*Who is pleased alike by Eglamore's neat plan and by his own cleverness in*

unriddling it.) But if rich Eglamore should make a stolen match with you, your father—good thrifty man!—could be appeased without much trouble. Your cousins, those very angry but penniless Valori, would not stay over-obdurate to a kinsman who had at his disposal so many pensions and public offices. Honor would permit a truce with their new cousin Eglamore, a truce very profitable to everybody.

GRACIOSA

He said they must be bought somehow!

THE DUKE

Yes, Eglamore could bind them all to his interest within ten days. All could be bought at a stroke by marrying you. And Eglamore would be rid of the necessity of sleeping in chain-armor. Have I not unravelled the scheme correctly, Eglamore?

GUIDO

(Smiling and deferential.) Your highness was never lacking in penetration.

(Graciosa, at this, turns puzzled from one man to the other)

GRACIOSA

Are you—?

THE DUKE

I am Alessandro de Medici, madonna.

GRACIOSA

The Duke!

THE DUKE

A sadly neglected prince, who wondered over the frequent absences of his chief counselor, and secretly set spies upon him. Eglamore here will attest as much—*(As Graciosa draws away from Guido)*—or if you cannot believe Eglamore any longer in anything, I shall have other witnesses within the half-hour. Yes, my twenty cut-throats are fetching back for me a brace of nuns from the convent yonder. I can imagine that just about now my cut-throats will be in your opinion more

trustworthy witnesses than is poor Eglamore. And my stout knaves will presently assure you that I am the Duke.

GUIDO

(Suavely.) It happens that not a moment ago we were admiring your highness' portrait.

GRACIOSA

And so you are Count Eglamore. That is very strange. So it was the hand of Eglamore *(rubbing her hands as if to clean them)* that I touched just now. I thought it was the hand of my friend Guido. But I forget. There is no Guido. You are Eglamore. It is strange you should have been capable of so much wickedness, for to me you seem only a smirking and harmless lackey.

(The Duke is watching as if at a play. He is æsthetically pleased by the girl's anguish. Guido winces. As Graciosa begins again to speak; they turn facing her, so that to the audience the faces of both men are invisible.)

GRACIOSA

And it was you who detected—so you said—the Marquis of Cibo's conspiracy. Tebaldeo was my cousin, Count Eglamore. I loved him. We were reared together. We used to play here in this garden. I remember how Tebaldeo once fetched me a wren's nest from that maple yonder. I stood just here. I was weeping, because I was afraid he would fall. If he had fallen, if he had been killed then, it would have been the luckier for him. They say that he conspired. I do not know. I only know that by your orders, Count Eglamore, my playmate Tebaldeo was fastened to a cross, like that *(pointing to the shrine)*. I know that his arms and legs were each broken in two places with an iron bar. I know that this cross was then set upon a pivot, so that it turned slowly. I know that my dear Tebaldeo died very slowly in the sunlit marketplace, while the cross turned, and turned, and turned. I know this

was a public holiday; the shopkeepers took holiday to watch him die, the boy who fetched me a wren's nest from yonder maple. And I know that you are Eglamore, who ordered these things done.

GUIDO

I gave orders for the Marquis of Cibo's execution, as was the duty of my office. I did not devise the manner of his punishment. The punishment for Cibo's crime was long ago fixed by our laws. All who attack the Duke's person must die thus.

GRACIOSA

(Waves this aside.) And then you plan this masquerade. You plan to make me care for you so greatly that even when I know you to be Count Eglamore I must still care for you. You plan to marry me, so as to placate Tebaldeo's kinsmen, so as to leave them—in your huckster's phrase—no longer unbought. It was a fine bold stroke of policy, I know, to use me as a stepping-stone to safety. But was it fair to me?

GUIDO

Graciosa . . . you shame me—

GRACIOSA

Look you, Count Eglamore, I was only a child, playing here, alone, and not unhappy. Oh, was it fair, was it worth while to match your skill against my ignorance?

THE DUKE

Fie, Donna Graciosa, you must not be too harsh with Eglamore—

GRACIOSA

Think how unhappy I would be if even now I loved you, and how I would loathe myself!

THE DUKE

It is his nature to scheme, and he weaves his plots as inevitably as the spider does her web—

GRACIOSA

But I am getting angry over nothing. Nothing has happened except that

I have dreamed—of a Guido. And there is no Guido. There is only an Eglamore, a lackey in attendance upon his master.

THE DUKE

Believe me, it is wiser to forget this clever lackey—as I do—except when there is need of his services. I think that you have no more need to consider him—

(He takes the girl's hand. Graciosa now looks at him as though seeing him for the first time. She is vaguely frightened by this predatory beast, but in the main her emotion is as yet bewilderment.)

THE DUKE

For you are very beautiful, Graciosa. You are as slim as a lily, and more white. Your eyes are two purple mirrors in each of which I see a tiny image of Duke Alessandro. *(Guido takes a step forward, and the Duke now addresses him affably.)* Those nuns they are fetching me are big high-colored wenches with cheeks like apples. It is not desirable that women should be so large. Such women do not inspire a poet. Women should be little creatures that fear you. They should have thin plaintive voices, and in shrinking from you should be as slight to the touch as a cobweb. It is not possible to draw inspiration from a woman's beauty unless you comprehend how easy it would be to murder her.

GUIDO

(Softly, without expression.) God, God!

(The Duke looks with delight at Graciosa, who stands bewildered and childlike.)

THE DUKE

You fear me, do you not, Graciosa? Your hand is soft and cold as a serpent's skin. When I touch it you shudder. I am very tired of women who love me, of women who are infatuated by my beauty. You, I can

see, are not infatuated. To you my touch will always be a martyrdom, you will always loathe me. And therefore I shall not weary of you for a long while, because the misery and the helplessness of my lovely victim will incite me to make very lovely verses.

(He draws her to the bench, sitting beside her.)

THE DUKE

Yes, Graciosa, you will inspire me. Your father shall have all the wealth and state that even his greedy imaginings can devise, so long as you can contrive to loathe me. We will find you a suitable husband—say, in Eglamore here. You shall have flattery and titles, gold and fine glass, soft stuffs and superb palaces and many lovely jewels—

(The Duke glances down at the pedler's pack.)

THE DUKE

But Eglamore also has been wooing you with jewels. You must see mine, dear Graciosa.

GRACIOSA

(Without expression.) Count Eglamore said that I must.

THE DUKE

(Raises the necklace, and lets it drop contemptuously.) Oh, not such trumpery as this. I have in Florence gems which have not their fellows anywhere, gems which have not even a name, and the value of which is incalculable. I have jewels engendered by the thunder, jewels taken from the heart of the Arabian deer. I have jewels cut from the brain of a toad, and from the eyes of serpents. I have jewels which are authentically known to have fallen from the moon. Well, we will select the rarest, and have a pair of slippers encrusted with them, and in these slippers you shall dance for me, in a room that I know of—

GUIDO

(Without moving.) Highness—!

THE DUKE

It will all be very amusing, for I think that she is now quite innocent, as pure as the high angels. Yes, it will be diverting to make her as I am. It will be an atrocious action that will inspire me to write lovelier verses than even I have ever written.

GUIDO

She is a child—

THE DUKE

Yes, yes, a frightened child who cannot speak, who stays as still as a lark that has been taken in a snare. Who would have thought that old rogue Balthazar Valori had such a jewel to offer! Well, I will buy it.

GUIDO

Highness, I love this child—

THE DUKE

Ah, then you cannot ever be her husband. You would have suited otherwise. But we will find some other person of discretion—

(For a moment the two men regard each other in silence. The Duke becomes aware that he is being opposed. Then Guido drops the cloak and gloves he has been holding until this.)

GUIDO

No!

THE DUKE

My friend, some long-faced people say you made a beast of me—

GUIDO

No, I will not have it.

THE DUKE

So do you beware lest the beast turn and rend you.

GUIDO

I have never been too nice to profit by your vices. I have taken my thrifty toll of abomination, I have stood by contentedly, not urging you on, yet never trying to stay you as you waded deeper and ever deeper into the filth of

your debaucheries, because meanwhile you left me so much power.

THE DUKE

Would you reshape your handiwork more piously? Come, come, man, be content with it as I am. And be content with the kingdom I leave you to play with.

GUIDO

It was not altogether I who made of you a brain-sick beast. But what you are is in part my handiwork. Nevertheless, you shall not harm this child.

THE DUKE

"Shall not" is a delightfully quaint expression. I only regret that you are not likely ever to use it to me again.

GUIDO

I know this means my ruin.

THE DUKE

Indeed, I must venture to remind you, Count Eglamore, that I am still a ruling prince—

GUIDO

This is nothing to me.

THE DUKE

And that, where you are master of very admirable sentiments, I happen to be master of all Tuscany.

GUIDO

At court you are the master. At your court in Florence I have seen many mothers raise the veil from their daughters' faces because you were passing. But here upon this hill-top I can see only the woman I love and the man who has insulted her.

THE DUKE

So all the world is changed, and Pandarus is transformed into Hector! Your words are very sonorous words, dear Eglamore, but by what deeds do you propose to back them?

GUIDO

By killing you, your highness.

THE DUKE

But in what manner? By stifling me with virtuous sentiments? It is rather awkward for you—is it not—that our sumptuary laws forbid you merchants to carry swords?

GUIDO

(*Draws his dagger.*) I think this knife will serve me, highness, to make earth a cleaner place.

THE DUKE

(*Drawing his long sword.*) It would save trouble now to split you like a chicken for roasting . . . (*He shrugs, and sheathes his sword. He unbuckles his sword-belt, and lays it aside.*) No, no, this farce ascends in interest. So let us play it fairly to the end. I risk nothing, since from this moment you are useless to me, my rebellious lackey—

GUIDO

You risk your life, for very certainly I mean to kill you.

THE DUKE

Two go to every bargain, my friend. Now, if I kill you, it is always diverting to kill; and if by any chance you should kill me, I shall at least be rid of the intolerable knowledge that tomorrow will be just like today.

(*He draws his dagger. They fight, the DUKE presently advancing. GUIDO steps backward, and in the act trips over the pedler's pack, and falls prostrate. His dagger flies from his hand. GRACIOSA, with a little cry, has covered her face.*)

THE DUKE

Well! am I to be kept waiting forever? You were quicker in obeying my caprices yesterday. Get up, you muddy lout, and let us kill each other with some pretension of adroitness.

GUIDO

(*Rising, with a sob.*) Ah!

(*He catches up the fallen dagger, and they fight again. GUIDO drives the DUKE back. GUIDO is careless of de-*

fence, and desirous only to kill. The DUKE is wounded, and falls with a cry at the foot of the shrine. GUIDO utters a strangled growl. He raises his dagger, intending to hack at and mutilate his antagonist, who is now unconscious. As GUIDO stoops, GRACIOSA, from behind him, catches his arm.)

GRACIOSA

He gave you your life.

(GUIDO turns. He drops the weapon. He speaks with great gentleness, almost with weariness.)

GUIDO

Madonna, the Duke is not yet dead. That wound is not serious.

GRACIOSA

He spared your life.

GUIDO

It is impossible to let him live.

GRACIOSA

But I think he only voiced a caprice—

GUIDO

I think so, too, but I know that all this madman's whims are ruthless.

GRACIOSA

But you have power—

GUIDO

Power! I, who have attacked the Duke's person! I, who have done what your dead cousin merely planned to do!

GRACIOSA

Guido—!

GUIDO

Living, this brain-sick beast will make of you his plaything—and, a little later, his broken, soiled and cast-by plaything. It is therefore necessary that I kill Duke Alessandro.

(GRACIOSA moves away, and GUIDO rises.)

GRACIOSA

And afterward—and afterward you must die just as Tebaldeo died!

GUIDO

That is the law, madonna. But what he said is true. I am useless to him, a rebellious lackey to be punished. Whether I have his life or no, I am a lost man.

GRACIOSA

A moment since you were Count Eglamore, whom all our nobles feared—

GUIDO

Now there is not a beggar in the kingdom who would change lots with me. But at least I shall first kill this kingdom's lord.

(He picks up his dagger.)

GRACIOSA

You are a friendless and hunted man, in peril of a dreadful death. But even so, you are not penniless. These jewels here are of great value—

(GUIDO laughs, and hangs the pearls about her neck.)

GUIDO

Do you keep them, then.

GRACIOSA

There is a world outside this kingdom. You have only to make your way through the forest to be out of Tuscany.

GUIDO

(Coolly reflective.) Perhaps I might escape, going north to Bologna, and then to Venice, which is at war with the Duke—

GRACIOSA

I can tell you the path to Bologna.

GUIDO

But first the Duke must die, because his death saves you.

GRACIOSA

No, Guido! I would have Eglamore go hence with hands as clean as possible.

GUIDO

Not even Eglamore would leave you at the mercy of this poet.

GRACIOSA

How does that matter? It is no secret that my father intends to market me as best suits his interests. And the great Duke of Florence, no less, would have been my purchaser! You heard him, "I will buy this jewel," he said. He would have paid thrice what any of my sisters' purchasers have paid. You know very well that my father would have been delighted.

GUIDO

(*Bitterly, as he sheathes the dagger.*) And I must need upset the bargain between these jewel merchants!

GRACIOSA

(*Lightly.*) "No, I will not have it!" Count Eglamore must cry. (*Her hand upon his arm.*) My dear unthrifty pedler! it cost you a great deal to speak those words.

GUIDO

I had no choice. I love you. (*A pause. As Graciosa does not speak, Guido continues, very quiet at first.*) It is a theme on which I shall not embroider. So long as I thought to use you as an instrument I could woo fluently enough. Today I saw that you were frightened and helpless—oh, quite helpless. And something in me changed. I knew for the first time that I loved you. And I knew I was not clean as you are clean. I knew that I had more in common with this beast here than I had with you.

GRACIOSA

(*Who has reached her decision.*) We daughters of the Valori are so much merchandise . . . Heigho, since I cannot help it, since bought and sold I must be, one day or another, at least I will go at a noble price. Yet I do not think I am quite worth the wealth and power which you have given up because of me. So it will be necessary to make up the difference, dear, by loving you very much.

(*Guido takes her hands, only half-believing that he understands her mean-*

ing. He puts an arm about her shoulder, holding her at a distance, the better to see her face.)

GUIDO

You, who had only scorn to give me when I was a kingdom's master! Would you go with me now that I am homeless and friendless?

GRACIOSA

(*Archly.*) But to me you do not seem quite friendless.

GUIDO

Graciosa—!

GRACIOSA

And I doubt if you could ever find your way through the forest alone. Besides, what else is a poor maid to do, when she is burdened with a talisman that compels her to marry the man whom she—so very much—prefers?

GUIDO

(*Drawing her to him.*) Ah, you shall not regret that foolish preference.

GRACIOSA

But come! There is a path—(*They are gathering up the pack and its contents, as Guido pauses by the Duke.*) Is he—?

GUIDO

He will not enter Hell today. (*The Duke stirs.*) Already he revives, you see. So let us begone before his attendants come.

(*Guido lifts her to the top of the wall. He lifts up the pack.*)

GRACIOSA

My lute!

GUIDO

(*Giving it to her.*) So we may pass for minstrels on our way to Venice.

GRACIOSA

Yes, singing the Duke's songs to pay our way. (*Guido climbs over the wall, and stands on the far side, examining the landscape beneath.*) Horsemen!

GUIDO

The Duke's attendants fetching him new women—two more of those numerous damsels that his song demands. They will revive this ruinous song-maker to rule over Tuscany more foolishly than Eglamore governed when Eglamore was a great lord. (*He speaks pensively, still looking down.*) It is a very rich and lovely country, this kingdom which a half-hour since lay in the hollow of my hand. Now I am empty-handed.

GRACIOSA

(*With mocking reproach.*) Empty-handed! (*She extends to him both her*

hands. Guido takes them, and laughs joyously, saying, "Come!" as he lifts her down.)

(*There is a moment's silence, then is heard the song and lute-playing with which the play began, growing ever more distant: . . . Knights as my serfs be given; And as I will, let music go and come . . . The Duke moves. The Duke half raises himself at the foot of the crucifix.*)

THE DUKE

Eglamore! I am hurt. Help me, Eglamore!

(THE CURTAIN FALLS)



Confessional

By Helen Frazee-Bower

I DO not fear the lightning's flash
Nor yet the thunder's roar;
I laugh to see the wild waves leap
Upon a frightened shore.

The earthquake holds no terror for
The braggart heart of me;
Nor comets whirling into space;
Nor night's immensity.

But oh, I fear a little wind
Upon a lonely hill,
A wind that blows into my heart
And whispers, and is still.

Too much it holds of memory,
Too soft it is and kind.
I do not fear the wrath of God—
But oh, a little wind!



Opinion

By John Hamilton

AN Angel was conducting me through the Land of Opinion.

We passed a handsome man in gay attire, accompanied by two slaves carrying money bags. Following him were many beautiful women.

"Who is that?" I asked.

"That," replied the Angel, "is your wife's idea of you."

"And he?" I asked, pointing to a man upon whose brow was marked the wisdom of Solomon, and whose figure indicated the strength of Hercules.

"The opinion of your children."

On a high throne, casting a glorious radiance about him, sat a man handsomer and nobler than all the rest.

"Who is that?" I asked of the Angel.

"That is the opinion you have of yourself," said the Angel.

I turned, to look upon the sorry little figure of a man with sallow skin, pale, wistful eyes, thick chin and baggy clothes.

"Who is that drab little creature?" I asked pityingly.

"You are looking," said the Angel, "into a mirror."



Great Deeds

By Marguerite Wilkinson

WHO can stay the winds of winter with a gesture?
Who can hold the rains of spring in her two hands?

*She can hide the gusty tears of her love
When her love commands.*

Who can cast a veil across the face of the sun
Lest he be too bold when he shines at noon?

*He can keep guard upon his lips day and night
Lest they speak too soon.*



Object Matrimony

By Alvin Johnson

I

FROM Monday morning to Saturday evening she was like a dusty, gray grub, hardly visible among the leaves even to the sharpest eye. From Saturday evening to Sunday night she was a moth, all fluttering motion and colour, which caught even the most sluggish eye and made it dance. In the grub stage she made her living by day's work, washing, cleaning, occasionally serving as cook or emergency nurse for a nerve-destroying apartment house child. In the moth stage she liked best, when the weather was fine, to walk briskly on Riverside Drive, smartly shod, well gloved, in a brightly ribboned hat and a gown of blue silk and white embroidery which could have betrayed the signs of instalment purchase only to feminine eyes whetted keen with malice; and Marie Stechel did not dress for feminine eyes.

The fresh young Columbia students scattered along the walk from the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument to Grant's Tomb all gazed on her approvingly; so, too, did the young business men who strolled in twos or fours talking volubly and dogmatically of Wall Street operations. And also the distinguished middle-aged gentlemen, with clothes so well made as to give charm even to an unduly bulging waistline, rested calm eyes rather caressingly on Mrs. Stechel's sunny face and trim figure. She firmly believed that she passed with the male strollers on Riverside Drive for a dweller in one of the luxuriously forbidding houses of the upper Seventies, or in a cliff high apartment of the University quarter. If only she could af-

ford a proudly stepping Great Dane hound, what a field of romance might not open! For there is nothing, she knew, that extends one's acquaintance like an engaging dog. That is, when one is young, bright-eyed and rosy, alert of step and vivacious of gesture, and often seen alone.

There was exhilaration in those walks, even if they had never yet come to anything. But as the sun touched the smoky hills beyond the river Mrs. Stechel would gather up her hopes with a sigh and set out for her room. Not that she did not know that the evening hours are the ore lode of romance. But she could not afford to go to work on Monday morning all tired out. That was the road to heavy eyes and sallow cheeks, a bent back and sunken breast; and then, what hope of romance? So an exemplary early hour always found her in her room, in the basement of a house on Amsterdam Avenue. Originally this had been the trunk room of the house, but an eccentric tenant of an upper floor had leased it for his dog, and had cut through the wall a two-paned window which looked out just at the level of the sidewalk. If Mrs. Stechel, stretched out on her iron cot in the deep gloom of her room, ever felt lonely, she had only to prop her head up a bit to see an endless procession of passing feet: shuffling feet of workingmen, quick feet of high school girls, tired feet of women returning from shops and offices, resolute feet, stealthy feet—in short, a whole democracy of feet. In periods of dejection Mrs. Stechel would watch those passing feet by the hour and murmur to herself:

"So this is life, in America."

On Mondays Mrs. Stechel did the washing for the Harris family, in 145th Street. Mrs. Harris was "all right" in Mrs. Stechel's classification, though she maintained a great stock of soiled linen from an interregnum of washerwomen, and fed it bit by bit into the weekly wash so as not to incur the expense of an extra day. On Tuesdays she washed and cleaned for Mrs. Briscoombe, a newly married lady who made so little work that Mrs. Stechel was almost ashamed to take her day's wage, frequently increased by a gift of food or clothing on days when Mrs. Briscoombe's happiness soared toward infinity.

"Foolish young thing," Mrs. Stechel would comment to herself. "What does she know about men?"

For all Mrs. Briscoombe's kindness, Mrs. Stechel was planning to sell her Tuesdays to someone else. The atmosphere of happiness was too sultry for her. But first she must get rid of her Wednesday employers, down in Seventy-third Street, who saved up scraps from a dozen meagre meals to make up her dinner, and her Thursday employers in the Courtney Arms who borrowed soiled linen from the neighbours down the hall if their own did not make up a sufficiently heavy wash. For Fridays and Saturdays she considered herself well suited and settled. Yet she was ready to exchange any employer she had for a new one, for among them all there was no presentable male servant, no unoccupied bachelor brother or son, not a single romantic possibility. And so she was rapidly mastering English, at least so far as it is represented in the Help Wanted advertisements.

Six days of drudgery with never a man in sight; a seventh day of going about all by oneself in a world containing not one friend or acquaintance; unnumbered hours of watching all varieties of feet passing the two-paned window; that was the sum of Mrs. Stechel's experience since she came to America, four months before.

She asked herself, was her life to continue like that, as if she were al-

ready aged, at twenty-four? Well, she would sigh, had she not had her share of the sweet and bitter? That first flaming affair with the University student, when she was only sixteen, the delicious hours in the Prater, in the excursion boats on the Danube, until her parents discovered what was going on and put her under lock and key. Then, to let the rich texture of the next two years slip by, there was the stormy wooing of Sergeant Garonyi, that tall, fierce-eyed Magyar whom Marie had at first considered so dreadful, but who had none the less won her heart in one hour and her hand in six. Marrying was in the air, in those days of mobilization. A month of happiness, and the tall sergeant was off to the Russian front, fated to fall before Przmysl, leaving Marie, a widow of nineteen, resolved to devote the rest of her life exclusively to the memory of her hero.

But Vienna was full of soldiers, young, gallant, handsome. Whenever Marie looked into a soldier's blue eyes or brown, a feeling of pity and tenderness would come over her; perhaps he, too, would soon lie cold on the shell-swept field. It would hardly have been humanly patriotic for her to have frowned on the suit of Corporal Bleischmidt, slender, brown-eyed, with restless lips that plead more eloquently than any words. Six months later an official postcard desolated her with the word that he had fallen on the Isonzo. That was too much for Marie. She had lost two husbands—and, if she would confess it, several lovers besides—in a space of two years. Fighting men were entrancing, but too great risks, emotionally. So Marie Bleischmidt migrated to Switzerland and took service as chambermaid in a hotel among the high Alps. On the second day after her arrival she met a sturdy wind-browned guide, Emil Stechel; on the third day she boxed his ears for kissing her without permission; on the fourth she married him. Then solid happiness for two years, until a party of reckless Englishmen took Emil up a particularly dangerous peak and came

back without him. Emil had gone over a precipice, some four thousand feet sheer, yodelling, so said the Englishmen, like a skylark. And so at twenty-three Marie was again a widow. Any kind of marriage, in present day Europe, was clearly an intolerable risk. She would go to America, where all men are rich and simple and live in safety.

So she had come to New York, and what she had found has been already set forth. Dreary labour, a dreary cave to live in, no friends, and not a man within sight of the naked eye. Europe might be starving and death stricken, but as compared with the desolation of New York it looked to Marie Stechel like an Eden from which one has been thrust forth.

To say that she had no friends is perhaps a trifle extreme. She did have a sort of friend in Berta, a large limbed, heavy faced Slovak woman who lived in a basement room under the elevated near Ninety-eighth Street. Berta also was engaged in day's work, and often exchanged jobs with Mrs. Stechel. Berta had solved her own problem, and had a husband to support, a wide-eyed, stocky Magyar, with material enough in him to make a man of medium height if it had been properly disposed. But nature had built him very low like a pigmy hippopotamus, and every time Mrs. Stechel thought of him as anybody's husband she was overcome by laughter.

"Do tell me, Berta," she said one day, "where did you pick him up? At a junk sale?"

"No," said Berta, not in the least offended. "Matrimonial ad. You ever see this?" And she drew from her overcoat pocket a copy of the *Matrimonial News*, much crumpled, because Berta always carried it with her when she went out to wash or clean, to con it over at her moments of rest. One would have said that after settling her own problem she would have had no further use for the *Matrimonial News*. But she still read it eagerly, as a Wall

Street lamb, though shorn to the quick, eagerly studies the fluctuations in the stocks that ruined him.

For some minutes Mrs. Stechel puzzled over the items. Then her face brightened.

"Ah, now I see. That is how you get husbands, in America."

II

IN 168th Street, Bronx, lived Henry Lindenmuller, capitalist, in the basement apartment of a nakedly new house which he had built and owned unencumbered. He also owned two other apartment houses, a boarding house at Far Rockaway, a meat market in One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street, and a spacious pharmacy in Yonkers. He also had fat parcels of stocks and bonds, and quantities of Liberties, the downward course of which he viewed with the greater rage because he had bought them out of patriotism and on account of his name and parentage. He was, in short, a very solid and substantial citizen, with a terrible hatred of graft, taxes, Bolshevism, rent laws and the "silly howl about profiteering."

He was a vast man, with wide set blue eyes under a brow that looked almost geographical in its dimensions, since every vestige of hair had disappeared from his crown. The voice that issued from his ponderous body was so deep and gruff that when it burst forth, even without imprecations, any hearer of employee status was inclined to faint. As for his own family, the constant impact of that voice and of the furious temper behind it had reduced them almost to the state of wan shadows. His wife, poor thing, had died of chronic fright years ago. There remained two thin, pathetic daughters and a slender anæmic son, to tremble under the old capitalist's moods. The daughters served as cashiers in the Lindenmuller meat market and the son mixed drugs in the Yonkers pharmacy. Woe unto them if those enterprises failed to show adequate profits, though

not one of them had the slightest share in the conduct of the businesses.

On the morning of October second there was a storm and an earthquake in the Lindenmuller basement apartment. Mr. Lindenmuller had lately been overruled in an appeal from what he regarded as a most iniquitous tax ruling and was out five thousand dollars, besides attorney's fees. Confound the government! But here were the household bills. Meat, sixty-three dollars. Two dollars a day for a family of four; outrageous! And the other bills were proportionately extravagant. Plainly, Olive and Louise were managing the household very badly. It had always been managed badly ever since his wife died.

"Brersch!" roared Mr. Lindenmuller, swallowing his last mouthful of coffee. "Olive! Louise! I work hard all my life to make a little money. You throw it out of the window, by double handfuls. It is no use. These children of this generation, what use are they? Brersch! I ought to get another wife!"

Olive and Louise trembled and turned pale. The threat was an old one, but Henry Lindenmuller had a way of making a threat, though a thousand times repeated, seem new and binding.

"Brersch! You, Olive, you get your pencil and pad and take a dictation. Quick now! Brersch! *The Matrimonial News. Gentlemen: Please insert following ad. A gentleman of means (rated by Dun, three-quarters million) no longer young, but robust and healthy, wishes to correspond with young widow, unencumbered, object, matrimony! Got that? Brersch. Read it. Mmm. Put in 'competent house-keeper'—No, you codfish head, not before 'unencumbered'; after it. Now type it and bring it to sign. I'll go on this way no longer.*"

The following Sunday, Marie Stechel, well shod and gloved, with red ribboned hat and gown of blue silk and white embroidery, tripped down the subway stairs, into 167th Street, Bronx. She glanced up street and down,

and shrugged her shoulders. "The Bronx, a terrible place." Then she set out resolutely, studying the house numbers and calculating where the Lindenmuller apartment must be. That square house of glazed brick on the corner, no doubt. She shrugged her shoulders again. How ugly! But a pile of money. Yes, that was the house.

She examined the cards in the triple row of mail boxes. No Henry Lindenmuller there. A flush of rage coloured her cheeks. So! It was all a fake! Berta had warned her that half the matrimonial ads were fakes, but somehow this one had seemed authentic. She would ring up the janitor and assure herself. Why, there was the card of Henry Lindenmuller, beneath the push button to the left of the door. Living in the basement, and rated at three-quarters of a million! Decidedly, a suspicious circumstance. She would have to be on her guard, but still, there could be no danger in ringing. She pushed the button.

"Yes?" sounded a faint voice from beneath the stairs.

Marie Stechel looked down into the dimness. It was a thin, anxious girl's face that looked up at her.

Mrs. Stechel's eye took rapid account of the girl's demeanour and carriage, of her clothing and the way she dressed her hair.

"It must be an honest house," she commented to herself.

"Is Mr. Lindenmuller at home?" she asked.

"Yes."

"I have had a letter from him. Tell him Mrs. Stechel would see him."

"Won't you come in?" said the girl.

Mrs. Stechel descended the steps and followed the girl down a dark hall to the rear living room, a room flooded with light from huge plate glass windows looking out upon the collective rubbish of a square of rears. In the center of the room, in a colossal creaking arm chair, was seated the most immense man Mrs. Stechel had ever seen. Could that be—? But no,

there was another man, very tall and thin, leaning against the mantelpiece, and flanked by the girl who had ushered Mrs. Stechel in and by another girl equally thin and ill favoured, sisters, obviously.

"Mr. Lindenmuller?" said Mrs. Stechel in a tentative tone, looking inquiringly at the young man.

"I am Henry Lindenmuller," sounded a deep voice from the armchair. "What do you want?"

Mrs. Stechel turned her eyes upon the monster. "No longer young, but of robust health." A terrible rage was rising in her, but she asked calmly, "It was you who answered my letter, then?"

"Yes." Henry Lindenmuller glowered at her. To his disgust, he was beginning to feel apologetic.

"You?" cried Mrs. Stechel, losing her self control completely. "You old, old, ugly man! You, you great mountain of fat! You, I tell you what you need. You don't need marrying, you; you need burying."

Paralysis fell like a November frost upon the anaemic younger generation by the mantelpiece. A purple flush overspread Henry Lindenmuller's face and vast expanse of bald crown. In all his life nothing had happened to him so damaging to his personal prestige, and that in the heart of his family, too, where his prestige had always been greater than that of all the laws and the prophets. But within the encumbering envelope of flesh there was in Henry Lindenmuller something that always moved and adjusted itself very quickly. That was the reason why he had succeeded in life.

"Madame," he said sternly. "You insult me by your groundless suspicions. Me want a wife? I am alone in life. I prefer to be alone, for I am strong. I am looking for a wife for that boy of mine."

He swung a hand majestically toward the pale youth at the mantelpiece.

"Father!" exclaimed Henry Lindenmuller, Jr.

"Brrsch!" The younger man trembled, and held his peace. Mrs. Stechel glanced at him critically. That plain, bloodless creature, after the sergeant who died at Przmysl, the corporal who died on the Isonzo, the guide who dropped from the cliff yodelling like a skylark! And besides—

She turned suddenly to the old man. "You say, rated three quarters million. You, or he?"

"All one," said Henry Lindenmuller dogmatically. "I am taking him into partnership with me."

"O Father!" cried the son, almost mortally stricken with gratitude.

"Brrsch!" The old man scowled at him. "As if you didn't know I meant to do it when you got married. You see," he turned to Mrs. Stechel, "he's a pretty good boy, but he lacks pep. But you have enough for two."

Mrs. Stechel again surveyed the young man. At any rate, he was tall, and that she held of first importance. Then, he had nice eyes, and his teeth would be good, if he had ever learned how to smile. After all, life's a gamble. And twenty-four is too late for one to be very exacting. Why not? She would. Fortunately she knew exactly what to do, having seen it done in the American movies in Vienna. She tripped up to him, put three gloved fingers on his chin and smiling bewitchingly, said,

"Oh, you kid."

Poor devil, not having frequented the movies, he had not the least notion what to do. Mortal embarrassment was upon him. He liked the pressure of the three fingers; and Lord, how pretty she was! Yet he could not have spoken or moved a finger to save his soul. But that was not necessary, for Mrs. Stechel also knew just what to do next.

"Say when, Kid? Tomorrow?"

The youth cast a terrified glance at his father, who nodded furiously.

"Uh huh," he breathed with a spasm of heroism. "Or today?"

Satan's Sorrow

By T. F. Mitchell

THE devil sat by the roadside weeping bitterly. Along came a saintly man who questioned him.

"Tired of sinning, perhaps?" he asked.

"No," answered the devil. "It is for this I weep: I am kept so busy tempting others that I have not time to sin myself."



Unwritten

By Bernice Lesbia Kenyon

NUMBERLESS letters that form across the page
Under my hand, thus, darkly and queer and small,
You can spell no part of the things I would say at all,
Nor free my thoughts that are trapped like mice in a cage.

You will never shine in colors, nor sing in themes
Most intricate-clear, nor stand up pointed and high,
Reaching with trees, or moving with birds that fly,
Or showing afar and vast with the form of dreams.

Very strange is this joy that cannot be told;
Very clear is its beauty and sharp its pain;
But very bitter are thoughts that clamour in vain—
That cannot escape, but must wait, and wait, and grow old.

O dreadful letters that write yourselves so fast,
Yet spell no word of the freedom I struggle for!
Shall I break the pen, and sit back, and write no more,
But fold my hands till the terrible joy is past?



Passages From My Uncollected Works

By Philip Owen

I

Success Hint.—I have been complimented on the neatness of my handwriting, my good taste in neckties, my deftness with a corkscrew, the oration that I delivered before the undertakers' convention in 1909, my shrewdness at stud poker, my acquaintance with Buffalo Bill, my knowledge of sixteen modern and seven ancient tongues, my degrees from twelve universities, my decorations from eight foreign governments, my refusal to run for Congress in 1904 on the Democratic ticket, the beauty of my wife, and the intelligence of my fourteen children. But all things considered, I have won more applause by my ability to wiggle my ears than by anything else.

II

Automobiles.—The pleasure that comes to me from riding in an automobile is no doubt an immoral one. I labor under no delusion that the vehicle is comfortable; an Irish jaunting car or a Vermont Central local does less toward pushing the liver into the epiglottis. Nor do I see any particular virtue in being hauled from one dull town to the other at a speed of fifty-eight miles an hour. What I like about the automobile is the patent of snob-bishness it gives. Any decent car costs a lot of money, and the people who are nearly run over by it appreciate that fact.

III

Genealogical Note.—Viewed mathematically, ancestor worship becomes depressing. By patient multiplication and addition, I discover that within twenty generations a man has the staggering total of 262,144 ancestors. This calculation will carry you back to about the beginning of the fourteenth century, or the end of the thirteenth. Beyond that I refuse to go. I am as willing as the next man to boast about my family for ten generations back, but I stop there. I refuse to boast about the whole human race.

IV

Perplexity.—I have been going fishing ever since I was old enough to bait a hook and spit on it properly; and still I do not understand why it is necessary for an orthodox fisherman to wear an old gray felt hat with flies stuck in the crown.

V

Mystery and the Parson.—The great trouble with ministers of the gospel is that they persist in reading deep lessons long after the rest of mankind has moved on to the next Punch and Judy show. They are professionally bound to see the resurrection of Christ in a row of pole beans; and God's infinite wisdom in an Erie train wreck. My quarrel with the parsons is that they see in the mystery that has troubled and moved man since the first morning

something as easily reducible to dogma as the multiplication table.

VI

Vauntings and Vanities. — The shrewdest business man of my acquaintance is particularly proud of the fact that he once talked for a few minutes with Kellar the magician. The best tailor between Esopus, N. Y., and Humanville, Mo., is always boasting about the game of cribbage that he played with P. T. Barnum. A retired glue manufacturer of Schenectady will never allow you to leave his house without first showing you his collection of stuffed birds. A dealer in coal, wood, hay, lime, straw, and cement in a town thirteen miles south of Terre Haute is never happy at a party until he has been allowed to do the nineteen card tricks that he knows. A prominent Methodist divine of Arkansas will take off his coat and roll up his sleeves any time to prove to you that he has a double-jointed elbow. The only one of my friends who professes to understand the Einstein theory spends three hours a day practising "The Love Nest" on the saxophone.

VII

A Word to Statesmen.—The man

who would have a public career must bear in mind, above all, the danger of levity. He may be corrupt or ignorant or maladroit; but let him avoid levity as the plague. He can commit misdemeanor, or be guilty of malfeasance, and still go scot free, if he will remember to sin with solemnity, with frequent references to the overpowering grandeur of this country, the imperishability of the Constitution, and the divine inspiration of the men with flour on their hair who wrote it. He need not even refer to all these if he is only solemn enough. But it will do him little good to refer to every one of the signers and framers by name if he allows levity to creep into the least of his public utterances. A sense of humor will be fatal to his career; but that circuitous and heavy-handed amiability that passes for humor in the hinterland will serve him well. Let him take warning from the fate of Tom Marshall: once he began to be witty, people accepted him as a clown making the best of his official futility. Whereas his colleague, the late Dr. Wilson . . . The ideal mask for the statesman is still that of Webster; given that, a voice established in the bowels, and a dozen gestures, a man may go far in public life.



A WOMAN smiles at a woman to show her derision and laughs to show her liking. She smiles at a man to show her liking and laughs to show her derision.



HANDCLAPPING: the actor's *Te Deum*.



Conversations

VIII. On Marriage

Set down by Major Owen Hatteras

Scene: *A dormitory at Muldoon's Health Farm*

Time: *5 A. M.*

NATHAN

(Rolling out of his cot.) Come on; it's time to get up. In a minute that damned Irishman will be here with his cold squirt-hose.

(No answer).

NATHAN

(Beating on the washstand with his shoe.) Arise, colleague, and to the day's torture!

(Suddenly Mencken sits up in his cot, stares about him wildly, and then leaps to the middle of the floor.)

MENCKEN

Name of a name! What a hell of a dream! It must be that sour clabber they gave us last night.

NATHAN

What did you dream?

MENCKEN

I dreamt that I was married!

NATHAN

You must be going crazy. Such dreams are pathological. Did you notice what the victim looked like?

MENCKEN

(With early morning irascibility.) Victim? She seemed well enough pleased with herself. You could see her wedding ring a block. It looked as thick as an automobile tire.

NATHAN

Let us buy a dream-book when we get back to New York, and find out what such a dream signifies.

MENCKEN

No need. I am a Marylander, and every Marylander knows all the dream books by heart. They never do anything down there without consulting them. Dreams are never obvious. That is, one can't interpret them literally. Now take this dream that just awoke me, with cold sweat pouring down my face. What does it amount to, put into plain words? Simply to this proposition: "I fear that I am married." Well, both elements have to be interpreted—the "I" part and the "fear that I am married" part. Neither, as I say, is to be taken literally. Now, then, let us substitute. In place of "I," I put "you"; in place of "fear that I am married," I put its opposite, "ought to be married." *Ergo*, we arrive at the interpretation of the dream: you ought to be safely and respectably married.

NATHAN

A superb tid-bit of ratiocination, and eminently characteristic of your logical processes! What actually awakened you with cold sweat pouring down your nose was not the dream but, obviously, the interpretation of it. The idea of my being safely and respectably married aroused your subconscious sympathy for me to such a degree that it woke you up

in order that you might consciously satisfy yourself it wasn't true. Such nonsensical talk of matrimony is offensive to me.

MENCKEN

Naturally. It is also offensive to you when the Irishman rubs you down with that stable-broom. What is good for you is never pleasant. Did you enjoy castor oil when you were a boy? Or logarithms at college? Do you chuckle and snicker when you pay your tailor? Indubitably no. Well, I don't argue that marriage would delight you, say as a fine bottle of Scharlachberger 1910 delights you, or maybe a carafe of Saint-Estèphe or a sniff of Ploussard. What I argue is that it would be salubrious for you, advantageous to you, beneficial to your spirit. It would mellow and civilize you.

NATHAN

I am already too highly civilized. Were it not for the overdose of civilization that has been inculcated in me, I should doubtless have been married long ago. That marriage civilizes a man, I do not gainsay. But to ask a man already civilized to get civilized all over again is like asking him to wear two undershirts. Furthermore, I dispute that marriage would benefit my spirit. It would make me too happy, and I couldn't do my work if I were too happy. A persistent touch of melancholy is essential to artistic enterprise. A happy man may be a successful bishop, dog-catcher, movie actor or sausage-monger, but no happy man ever produced a single first-rate piece of painting, sculpture, music or literature. I have aspirations.

MENCKEN

Dispute it all you please: the fact remains. The life you lead is too lonely. It throws you in upon yourself too much. Hence your hallucinations. Two or three weeks in that padded celibate cell of yours and I'd be seeing things too. Ghosts would hide in the wastebasket and jump out of the spittoon. What you need is a counter-irritant—a devoted wife to watch over you and

police you, with maybe half a dozen little ones to break your rest and keep you constantly alarmed. A siege of measles would be a good thing for you. It would take your mind off your own malaises. I am a great believer in marriage. It is a noble institution. It keeps a man in health and order. It surrounds him with threats and menaces. It makes a better citizen of him. If you were married you wouldn't have to come to this Golgotha to be currycombed and manhandled by Muldoon's bouncers.

NATHAN

But where would I find the devoted wife that you so touchingly describe? It is inconceivable that any woman, once she penetrated my many superficial charms, could be devoted to me. Never was there such an ignoble crank! If, after ten mellifluous years of marriage and after giving birth to our fourteenth beautiful child, my loving wife were one day to so much as snitch a favourite lead-pencil off my writing table, I would probably proceed forthwith to the big scene from "The Chinatown Trunk Mystery." I am not designed for marriage any more than a longshoreman is designed for Christian Science. But, after all, what has marriage to do with virtue? This place is full of married men. They drink just as much as I do, and sit up just as late Saturday nights.

MENCKEN

Then they are married unhappily. But you would be happy. Despite your gabble about your temperament, you have all the necessary talents. You are not cranky, but very polite. You notice what women have on, and praise it convincingly. You can stand their conversation. You like children. I advise you to marry the first respectable white woman who applies, and settle down with her decently.

NATHAN

You talk like the Woman's Page in *Comfort*. To hear you rant, one would think that you yourself had a wife, and ten children. Or maybe even two wives.

MENCKEN

It is my loss that I haven't—and the world's. I venerate the institution.

NATHAN

Then why are you still a bachelor?

MENCKEN

What a question! Why should I marry, who have no gift for it? I dislike women and hate children. Your logic is full of holes. Is it necessary for a man who admires baseball, for example, to play baseball? It is not. I elect to view marriage from a seat in the cosmic bleachers. I am a fan, not a performer.

NATHAN

But how you can still admire the institution after giving so much powerful study to it is more than I can grasp. I know intimately some thirty sensitive, civilized married men and women, and not one of them but would go back to the solo life instantaneously if he or she could do it. Marriage may not be a failure, as the platitude goes, but it is surely a fire sale. A married man is one who has been badly damaged by the already burned-out fire of his love. The same with a married woman.

MENCKEN

I hold against you. Marriage is an insurance against romance. It makes a man safe, and secure, and comfortable. Did you ever know a bachelor who was in as good health as the average benedick?

NATHAN

No. But that proves nothing. I never knew a bachelor who was in as good health as the average mule.

MENCKEN

You overlook the protection that marriage affords a man. Married, he is safe from nine-tenths of the hazards that continually confront the man who isn't married. Surely you will not deny that the unpleasant features of wedlock are compensated for by its single virtue of placing a man in the position of having no longer to maneuver elaborately day in

and day out to escape marriage. Think of the relief, the peace of mind, the charm of such a position!

NATHAN

According to your philosophy, it would be an equal relief for a one-legged man to have his other leg cut off, thus freeing his mind from the question of legs altogether.

MENCKEN

Not at all. A man with legs never thinks about them. But cut them off, and legs become the subject constantly uppermost in his mind.

NATHAN

We are not discussing musical comedy, my friend, but marriage. And you have not yet advanced a single argument that soundly supports your regard for it. You say that marriage keeps a man in good health. Well, so do heavy doses of cod-liver oil and flannel belly-bands. You say that it safeguards his mind for all time from further thought of marriage. Well, so does locomotor ataxia. Your cures are worse, and even more bitter, than the diseases.

MENCKEN

You argue in circles—nay, in zigzags. For one thing, you assume fatuously that I regard a love affair as a secure basis for marriage. Nothing could be more absurd. Love is a casual matter, a chance infection, a thing not unlike a cold in the head. The process of falling in love is as fortuitous and trivial as the process of missing a train. Some fair one, hearing that one has recently received an LL.D. from Yale or made a killing at some swindle, goes to a beauty parlour, has her eyebrows gummed, puts on her best frock, and then leers at one across a dinner-table. The result, by a well-known psychological route, is the genesis of the idea that she has lovely eyes and a beautiful character, and that it would be charming to give her a hug. Or maybe the thing is pure accident. Perhaps she goes to the party without the slightest thought of serious profes-

sional business—and one is floored by the perfume she happens to wear, or by her anecdote of her little nephew, Lafcadio, or by the pretty way she takes it when the Colonel upsets his *potage Arlesienne* down her leg, or by the peculiar manner in which her hair is banged, or by the striking combination of cerise and non-cerise in her fourth-best party dress. Such is love, a madness worse than hydrophobia. To say that a man should be in love when he marries is to say that a ship-captain should be doubled up with cramps when he steers down the Ambrose Channel. It is a folly.

NATHAN

Although I am not the authority on love that you appear to be, I permit myself to disagree with you. If falling in love is as easy as you say, set me down at once as *non compos womentis*. No less than one thousand times in my life have I assiduously tried to fall in love, but to be baffled. All the time that I have been eloquently trying to convince myself that the gal eating dinner at my expense was a divine mélange of Saint Saëns, apricots and chiffon, some irrepressible hanswurst within me has confounded me with the hypothesis that she was merely another Lucile gown that hadn't had enough lunch. My imagination and my intelligence meet, to my sorrow, at an eternal Château Thierry. I have thus far fallen in love, during the thirty-nine years of my life, with twenty-seven lace and linen baby collars, eighteen bobbed hairs, forty-three blue dresses, ten lisps, thirty-six pairs of hands on my forehead when I was down with neuralgia, and eleven dozen initialed handkerchiefs and laundry bags, but not with a single girl. What, therefore, am I to do about it? I am helpless. And to ask me to marry a girl I don't love is to ask me to go to Buffalo when I have business in Chattanooga.

MENCKEN

The love you describe is quite enough. Love is not a goal, but a starting point. Your very incapacity for love suits you ideally for marriage. Just as the greatest

heroic feats in war are performed not by experienced soldiers but by novices, so would the marriage of an amateur like yourself turn out a magnificent thing.

NATHAN

Pursuing the same logic, I suppose that you argue that the man afflicted with arteriosclerosis makes the best ballet dancer.

MENCKEN

Not at all. What I contend is that your admiration for a few dollars' worth of lace around a gal's neck is of just as great horse-power as some other fellow's admiration for the gal *in toto*. Many a man has married for love no better supported, and has been happy. The great lovers of history haven't fallen for women, but for teeth, hair, eyes, smiles, silk garters, or a "No," as the case may have been.

NATHAN

You comfort me, but you fail to convince me. Say I am floored, as I was at 5:30 P. M., standard Eastern time, last Wednesday, by a remarkable set of teeth. Say I were to lift those teeth into a taxicab, shoot to the Little Church Around the Corner, and swear to love, honour and obey them for the rest of my natural life. Explain to me now how thirty-two pretty teeth would operate to keep me in order, improve my health, make a better citizen of me, and safeguard my comfort, as you claim. I put it up to the teeth, and properly. I didn't see the girl.

MENCKEN

That girl is none the less unquestionably just the wife for you. The trouble with ninety-nine out of one hundred men is that they marry girls whom they have carefully appraised from head to toe. Their disillusion is therefore all too quick. But in a case like yours, your attention would be claimed primarily by the girl's teeth; you wouldn't begin to notice the rest of her until long after most husbands are already tired of their wives; you would thus be contented and happy for an unusually long period.

NATHAN

I go with you only half a block. The happiest marriage is not that which defers disillusion, but that which admits it at the outset. Few marriages in which the man is over forty and the woman over thirty ever turn out unhappily. Age is happy; youth, unhappy. Illusion is the happiness of the heart; disillusion is the merriment of the mind. I apologize for the platitudes. I am never strikingly original until after I've had my bath.

MENCKEN

Behold, the night cometh when even a bath will fail. You are, by the calendar, already at the edge of forty years. As a practical mammal you are nearer sixty. On no distant day your physician will ban the shower-bath for your heart's sake, as he already bans fried scallops and marshmallows for the sake of your tummy. Can you drink as much as you used to? You cherish the illusion that you can, but the sphygmomanometer tells a different tale. What of that ale-party? It damn nigh killed you. Can you work as much as you could, say, in 1902? Do you fence any more? How long has it been since you jumped over a bale of hay? Nay, you deteriorate, and not only physically, but also spiritually. Nature abhors the intellect. Its aim is always to reduce all men to the level of so many Ph.D.'s. You are on your tragic way, not only toward gout and astigmatism, but also toward platitude. Well, marriage is the supreme platitude. *Verbum sap.*

NATHAN

What you propose is simply spiritual suicide. You ask me to cut my throat on the ground that I may be down with Bright's disease in 1945.

MENCKEN

In a sense, yes. But you forget the one great virtue of death: it is comfortable. So is marriage—if one is old enough. As for me, I am still too young. In a very real sense I don't know my own mind.

NATHAN

Yet you presume to read mine. I tell you, once and for all time, that the idea of marriage is objectionable to me. The very mention of it perturbs me. I dislike your talk of it as much as I dislike your constant gabble about embolisms, staphylococci, compound fractures and nitrobenzol fumigation. Shut up.

MENCKEN

Again I point to Freud. To me the thought of marriage is not obnoxious, and for a very simple reason: I stand in no danger of it. No doubt there are women in the world who would marry me, at least in preference to going on the street, but I must confess humbly that their willingness seldom shows itself exigently. But that is not the main thing. The main thing is that I stand in no need of marriage—that I am quite as safe and comfortable now, on my estates in Maryland, as I would be with a wife, or even six wives. Thus there is no subconscious pull in me in favour of it, and so I can contemplate it without choler. Well, the very fact that you can't is proof of your inner inclination—of the hard pull of the subtle and infallible instinct that safeguards the individual. The powers and principalities of the air root for your union to some amiable and watchful miss. You are nominated for the altar by a just and omnipotent God. Your reluctance begins to verge upon blasphemy. Moreover, it is idiotic. You'd be better off if—

NATHAN

Permit me, friend Strindberg, to judge of that for myself. I—

MENCKEN

Hollow words. Idle words. You are the worst of all possible judges of your own advantage. It would be cruel to hand you over to your own mercies. Suppose I had done it in the matter of your lumbago? You'd have been on crutches by now, and fed from a spoon. Suppose I had done it in the matter of that Belgian countess? You'd have—

NATHAN

I return the ball, and with a wallop. I have saved you at least ten times, not only from bankruptcy and fatal disease, but also and especially from women. Well, I now continue my good offices. That is, I counsel you to marry and settle down. Put the whole business into my hands. I'll find the girl, see that she has enough money to support you decently, and arrange all the details. And if she is short of money, then I'll at least make sure that she has a kind heart. I am astounded that a man as vain as you are hasn't got himself lawful offspring long ago. You regard your very existence as a great favour to the Republic. When you speak of your family, it is in the tones proper for speaking of 1884 Tinta Amarella, or the Battle of Agincourt, or the bones of St. Chrysostum. I know all the chief snobs of New York, but you are one of the damndest. Well, what fetches me is this: if you are actually the superb creature that you say you are, then why don't you perpetuate yourself in the traditional manner? Can it be that you are really willing to let your race die out when you yourself are shoveled into the crematory? I should think that your patriotic feelings would revolt against the idea. You should put it away as unmanly and anti-social. Year pursues year. You are older than I am. What I propose is that you forthwith do your duty to your family, to your country and to posterity. Shoulder arms! March!

MENCKEN

With all due respect, I decline unqualifiedly. The Republic has yet to reward me suitably for inhabiting it. I make a sacrifice, but get no thanks. In fact, whenever I hear the matter discussed at all, the prevailing view of Americans is that I'd achieve a public boon by getting out. Such is the gratitude of an unimaginative, envious and ignoble people. If, now, I should put my inclination and best interests upon the altar and found a family, it would be supererogation. Moreover, I doubt that my children would be appreciated

any more than I am. After they had passed their nonage in my society, imbibing my prejudices, it would take artillery or a convulsion of nature to convert them into 100% Americans, or even into one-half of 1% Americans. The chances are, indeed, that they'd be sent to Atlanta Prison at birth, or, at all events, as soon as they were confirmed. This would grieve my wife, probably a respectable and right-thinking young woman.

NATHAN

Don't worry. Your wife would train them, not you. They would live to be ashamed of your holiest sentiments, as they would be ashamed of your hat and overcoat. I venture to predict that if you ever have a son he will die a Methodist bishop. Your oldest daughter will be a professor of rhythmic dancing in some woman's college. The twins will run for Congress.

MENCKEN

You sicken me. I positively gag. Lay off, I prithee!

NATHAN

Very well, but I demand tit for tat. Have done with your grisly chatter about marrying me off to get me a nurse when my knees give out, and I'll give up talking about your progeny. Is it a bargain?

MENCKEN

I—

(*Uncerthly yells are heard in the next cell.*)

NATHAN

What is that?

MENCKEN

The Irishman has tackled De Wolf Hopper.

NATHAN

(*Leaping into his pantaloons.*) Let us get out of here!

MENCKEN

(*Pulling his shirt over his head.*) I am with you!

(*They exit precipitately.*)

Immune

By Edith Chapman

I

HER appearance never varied much during the ten years that I knew her. When I first saw her she was eighteen. She passed out of my ken at twenty-eight, that age when, according to the connoisseurs, a woman is at her time of greatest blooming. Passed out of everyone's, though the chances are that she is blooming somewhere now. She wasn't one to give it up.

She had an arresting exterior, arresting in its very simplicity and suaveness. She was tall though not immoderately so. Her figure was exquisite. It was also, beneath the neutrality of her clothes, utterly aware of itself and anxious to produce its effect. She was very slim, though rounded. Small-boned and delicate and lithe.

Her frailty was always attractive, part of her general slightly morbid charm. It went with her pale skin and her dull thick hair. She was a sort of sublimated Elaine with a dash of the Guinevere; and it was that dash which gave the Elaine part of her its pull. Her face wasn't pretty until she smiled. Even then the chin was a bit heavy with an egocentric, humourless sag which gave her away, or would have if one had been watching. But one overlooked such fine points in the charm of that smile. Her little pointed teeth came out of it whiter and more even than a doll's. Her myopic, heavy-lashed, blue eyes shone with a pensive, lambent light. Her very pallor seemed to grow vivid. Though this last impression was pure bunk. Her pallor never varied, never lessened, and she had the sense to let it alone.

S. S.—July—7

It was a very singular thing, this exterior of hers. On first seeing her the chances are you wouldn't think her even pretty. Nice-looking girl, you would say, good figure, good eyes, but nothing more. It was several hours, sometimes days, before her looks began to tell on you. But they inevitably did tell in the end. I've never known them to fail. With some men it was that smile of hers, slow, subtle, a little supercilious. With others it was her slack, beautiful hands. With some men it was her throat which was actually stem-like. I think, myself, it was this subtle miscarrying of all her features; in so much apparent perfection, the excitement of tracking down the flaw.

Her best feature was her eyes. They were very handsome to look at, but as organs for seeing practically useless. She should have worn glasses continually, for she couldn't see three feet in front of her without them. But instead she peered and strained with them, or in a tired fashion drooped down her long lashes, biting her short upper lip with vexation because she "was so blind." She had a way of appealing to you to do her seeing for her, of implying that she depended on you for all her values which gave you an awfully protective feeling. That upward, imploring look of hers, with her red lip between her teeth, was irresistible.

She was living at her aunt's when I first knew her, and going to college in the town. Her aunt, as it happened, took paying guests, and that year of Lila's advent I became one of them.

My impressions of that first period of our acquaintance are very few, for

I hardly noticed her at all. I was absorbed in my business, frightfully ambitious and, as I thought, in love with some one else. I thought of Lila as a nice-looking girl, a little egotistical and serious, and too impersonal ever to excite me. Little did I know her. Whatever adjectives you could apply to her, impersonal wasn't one of them.

However, I had some justification. She was impersonal then so far as men were concerned. She didn't wake up, sexually, until about three years later, and then she woke up overnight as it were, and in command of all her powers. The difference between her apprenticeship and that of other girls was that hers was a long, thorough, but utterly subconscious process. At that time her school life still absorbed her. She could never be absorbed in more than one thing at a time.

One incident that I remember was finding her at work one afternoon, sewing what seemed to me hundreds of small cloth violets onto some tarleton material. I asked her what she was doing.

"Making a costume," she told me. "It's an awful job, but it will be lovely if I ever get it finished. I designed it myself."

I could only gasp, "Are you going to cover all that material with those violets."

She nodded laughing. "I have to, if I want to get the effect I'm after. It'll be worth it, though."

I can see her yet, sitting there, evening after evening, stitching at the stuff and holding it up to her near-sighted eyes. What impressed me most was the infinite patience of her vanity.

She must have been exceedingly popular at the school. She was always getting presents of candy and flowers which she said some students had sent her. "Crushes," she called them. She pretended to despise these tributes, but she invariably greeted them with her little subtle, self-satisfied smile.

My second definite impression was in connection with her summer activities. To eke out her support—she was de-

pending on her aunt during the three years of her college work—she was accustomed, in the summer vacations, to take charge of a group of children every afternoon.

These children, as I look back on it now, were afraid of her though they pretended to adore her. If they hadn't, at least seemed to adore her, she couldn't have stood it. She couldn't bear not to please. However, under the semblance of amusing them, she used to work them pretty hard in her own interests. She was always sewing at her clothes in the summer time. The little girls could help at this. The boys even could perform set tasks. There was one little boy in particular who did slavishly worship her. He wasn't outwardly as attractive as the others. I think she disliked him for that, though she was glad to have him fond of her. He lived by the light of her favour, watched her with frightened, adoring eyes, and followed her about like a little dog. "Oh, Tommy, don't tag after me so," I often heard her cry at him.

On this particular occasion he did something wrong with a piece of ribbon that she had given him to cut into certain lengths. She rebuked him sharply for what was only an accident, after all, and refused to notice him the rest of the afternoon. When at the end of the day she kissed all the children good-bye—this was a kind of sacred ceremony which they pretended at least to care a lot about—she refused to kiss Tommy. He was really heartbroken. "Oh, Miss Lila, please don't send me away like this. I didn't mean to spoil the ribbon." And his voice ended in a sob.

I waited for her to comfort him, but she didn't even smile.

"You did spoil it," she told him coldly. "I can't wear the waist now. I wanted to wear it tonight." And she let him go away sobbing.

It wasn't so much that glimpse of cold cruelty in her as the unexpectedness and incongruity of it that struck me. Her usual manner was so sweet, so conciliating, so almost deprecatory.

With people who showed the slightest symptom of being hostile to her she was as gentle and ingratiating as a child. We in the house saw her chiefly in that rôle, for she was very much in awe of her aunt and anxious to please her. That this apparently pliant creature could be concealing such a capacity for resistance interested me as much as it shocked me. She wasn't simple, then, after all. She had her depths, her secrets. I began to watch her with a good deal of curiosity. She was from that day something more to me than a *jeune fille*.

Whether her interest in her clothes, her appearance in general, was greater than that of other girls, I have no way of knowing. I only know that in her case it was an intensive, almost a religious devotion. I imagine she never sat in the darkest shadow of her own chamber, unpowdered, unscented, or with any of those immaculate rites omitted which would have jeopardized her concept of herself as feminine and alluring.

"I declare," her aunt broke out one morning at the breakfast table, "I don't know what Lila can find to do from seven to quarter past eight. I call her at seven sharp and know she gets up then, for I hear her. She actually takes an hour and a quarter to dress."

For one interval, we were all amused by the girl's starvation tactics at meals. She either simply nibbled at everything, or omitted large quantities of food altogether.

"What's the idea?" somebody asked, and then, as an improbable joke, "trying to get thin?"

She serenely nodded. "Yes, I've gained three pounds. I have to lose them."

"Don't lose them, Lila," I advised. "They're immensely becoming. You'll never be fat."

She smiled. "Oh, I know that. But I know just how much I should weigh. I don't want to go an ounce above it." And she did lose them, probably, as she so justly knew, to her improvement.

This forcing of herself, physically

and mentally, to fulfil a certain type was a faculty of hers which I can't emphasize too often, for it seems to me the keystone not only of her character but of her future power. By virtue of this fanatical self-idealization she was able to impose her concept, as a less confident or a more realistic person could never have done. One saw her in the light of her own intense projection.

II

LILA was graduated one June and went away the following Fall to fill a teacher's position in the South. I had only desultory news of her during the following year. She was doing very well with her teaching, her aunt told us. She was making a lot of friends and enjoying quite a bit of social life. The one she bragged about most was "a dear old Southern Major, one of the school's trustees, and a very influential man in the town." When she fell ill about Christmas time, this same major rescued her from the place she was stopping at, and removed her to his own home, where she was cared for by his sister and treated in every way as an adopted daughter. From the aunt's sketchy and rather troubled reports, I inferred that Lila had stayed on at the Major's and was enjoying, through him, whatever fleshpots the town afforded.

She was expected home the end of June, and I, being the proud owner of a new Buick, was delegated to go to the station to meet her. As might have been expected, her train was late, and when it did arrive, I saw no sign of her. I waited for the last tail of passengers to file past me and was about to leave when suddenly she stood before me.

I shall never forget that first impression of her. She was very much the same, and yet *different*. To begin with, she was dressed differently. She had on a stunning tailored suit. She had never dressed badly, even in the old days; her taste was too fastidious for

that, but her clothes had been of cheap materials and home-made. This dress was a plain, dark affair that set off the almost miraculous slighthness and sureness of her figure as nothing else could. She wore a small hat from under which fluffed her lovely hair, a smart veil, and in the front of her jacket a flower of some sort.

I was even more fascinated with her when, once back at the house, she stopped with me a moment in the living room and took off her coat and hat. Her hair was done beautifully, giving her head a smoother, more sophisticated look. Her skirt was cut in the prevailing fashion of that season, high in the waist, narrow and very long. That dark sheath affair, beginning just below her small breasts and filling out ever so subtly in the region of the hips, gave to her slenderness the most delicate yet somehow challenging effect. I couldn't take my eyes from the beautiful, suave lines of that plain dress. Her expression was different, too, more alert, more conscious. Her eyes, though still peering, were no longer misty; they had acquired the feline light which they never lost.

I saw a good deal of her that summer. I was madly in love with her from the first day. I think she liked me in a casual way, and of course my interest in her was worth exploiting. She had nothing better on. We motored and boated and danced together. She wasn't living at her aunt's now. She was boarding with her invalid mother about five blocks away. The care of the latter had devolved upon her, since the removal of an older brother to Australia. Her aunt hadn't room for the two of them nor I think any great inclination. The other arrangement was more satisfactory all round.

I was by no means Lila's only suitor. Most of her time was taken up with someone. When she had been home about three weeks, there suddenly descended upon her a doctor from the town where she had been teaching.

She brought him to dinner, played around with him exclusively for two days, and the third day sent him packing.

She confided to me afterward that he wanted to marry her, but she couldn't see it. He was lots older than she was, and rather tiresome on the whole.

Being in a confiding mood that evening—we had motored into the country for dinner and were driving home through the moonlight—she told me of some of her other affairs of the past year. There was a young writer among others. She liked him the best, but he didn't make enough. Whether it was her implied dependence on me, the soft night, or simply the indescribable charm of the girl, I suddenly stopped the car and, for all her aloofness, tried to draw her into my arms.

She seemed to yield just at first but I felt beneath even this compliance something resistant and inflexible. Her lips met mine for the merest instant in one of the coldest kisses I have ever known and then she pushed me away.

"Why did you?" she murmured in a low, wounded voice that made me feel as though I had been unforgivably crude and brutal. "It was so beautiful before. Why do men always want to spoil everything? This other thing is what everyone does, stenographers and telephone girls and their 'fellas.' Oh, please don't let's you and I be vulgar."

I was cowed and almost impressed for the time being, but I started up the car in a somewhat baffled state. In the midst of my mortification I somewhere seemed to feel a false note. She sounded earnest enough. Perhaps she was much more fastidious and ascetic than most girls.

Her fragile appearance bore out such a theory. Perhaps the innate coarseness of men did actually shock her. But on the other hand, didn't she do her best to bring such a state of things about? She had been flirting with me atrociously for three weeks, egging me on in every way that a clever woman

knows. Her clothes, her perfumes, her gestures, the very tones of her voice at times, her way of leaning toward you until her breath fanned your cheek, or letting her shoulder graze against your arm—was there anything spiritual or ascetic in all that?

I drove her home in silence. As I was putting her down before her door, she laid her ungloved hand on mine.

"You won't be angry with me? I shall see you tomorrow?" Her smile was indescribably gentle and conciliating, but there was a glint of something watchful, almost triumphant in the depths of her great eyes.

I did see her the next day, and the next, and the next, accepting somewhat morosely her version of what our relations were to be. I fetched and carried for her, danced her and fed her, and was content with a furtive hand-clasp now and then or even more rarely, one of her swift, cold, almost ritualistic kisses. There was scarcely a day that summer when I didn't see her and then only because I wasn't allowed to. And I wasn't the only one. There were five or six of us with whom she was playing exactly the same game. I knew this and still hung on. We all did, desperately hoping.

The day that she had to leave we loaded her with flowers and took her, *en masse*, to the station. We carried her mother into the train for her, settled them in their compartment, and hung about until the last moment, blocking the aisle. As the train was about to move, and I was the last to leave the car, I heard her say to her mother in a tone that wasn't supposed to have reached my ears:

"Those dear silly boys! They've bored me to death most of the time with their flowers and their nonsense. But I *shall* miss them."

I think that remark settled the whole business for me as nothing previously had managed to do. I had her number now, and I was through with her, fed up. Except as an interested and

amused spectator I congratulated myself that I was through with her kind for good. I felt a tingle of real victory as I walked away.

III

It was about three years later that I received through her aunt the news of her marriage to a young army officer, stationed in Texas for the time being, but soon to be transferred north. The letter announcing this fact contained a description of her husband which her aunt somewhat skeptically read aloud.

"Joe is wonderful," Lila gushed, "and such a relief after all the other men I have known." Some of us glanced at each other in commiseration on this. "He has never cared about women, before; never had anything to do with them."

"And an officer," I muttered *sotto voce*, "of our glorious army!"

"He's as chivalrous," the aunt continued to read, "as an ancient knight, and as idealistic, poor dear. You should see the way he waits on me and worships me. He seems to think I'm made of glass and that if I try to do anything myself, I'll break. I think he'd almost feed me if he could. And with all that, the things he doesn't know. He's a perfect child, though an awfully big one; six feet two, blond, terribly stern and formal to everyone but me. Oh, Aunt Jessica, he's perfectly adorable. Mother is utterly happy about it all. She thinks she will love army life. It's so continually new and exciting."

The idea of that silent, chair-ridden invalid relishing movement and excitement was too grotesque for even her aunt to suppress a smile. She understood perfectly how the mother had said precisely what her daughter told her to. People generally did when Lila instructed them in her gentle, imperious voice.

There was a lapse of another two years and then a sudden invitation from Lila to come and visit her. They

were quartered now in a fort in northern Minnesota.

My first impulse was to refuse. What had I to gain by going? Lila didn't interest me any longer. Even her kind of beauty had lost its attraction. I had fallen lately for a totally different type . . . But I went nevertheless.

I think the psychology of the situation drew me. The girl would be interesting to watch in her new rôle. I knew she would manage to make as much of an art and a drama of marriage as she did of everything else. What was the rôle she had cast for her husband? What was she getting out of army life? Was she still pretty?

I telegraphed her I would come, and arrived on the date agreed. I found her settled in a small but attractive house, her mother still with her, and her husband a good deal as she had described him. He was tremendously big and blond; also, for all his formal West Point manner, pathetically naïve. "You're one of Lila's old suitors," he greeted me. "I've heard all about you."

"If you have, you know that I was awfully unsuccessful and soon yielded my claim," I tried to reassure him, for there was a real anxiety under the attempted jocoseness of his tone.

What was the man afraid of? What had Lila told him? Heaven knew my relations with her had been platonic enough.

"You mustn't let Joe annoy you," she put in. She had entered the room at that moment and had evidently heard the tinge of irritation beneath my last remark. "He's terribly, ridiculously jealous. Joe, what have you been saying?"

She pretended to frown at him roguishly as she passed in front of him over to me with extended hands. She grasped both of mine and held onto them a good deal longer than she needed to, as she smiled up at me with her old, cloying smile.

"I can't tell you how glad I am that

you managed to come. It's a long time, isn't it, since we've seen each other? Over five years." She coquetted with me openly, pressing my hands with hers, letting her voice flood with overtones, gazing up at me adoringly.

What enraged me most was my own helplessness. I had no desire to interrupt her drama but I hated being featured in it as a pawn.

Her husband had never taken his eyes off her since she had entered the room. Now he stood watching us both with his pained, baffled gaze. He looked, for all his bigness, like a whipped spaniel that she was holding on a leash.

Finally I seemed to muster up the nerve to wrench my hands free.

"How is your mother?" I stiffly inquired.

"Oh, mother's beautiful. She adores it here and everyone adores her. You must come with me to see her by and by. She never leaves her room now; she's very feeble, you know. But I've told her you are here, and she's awfully anxious to see you. . . . Joe," the quality of her voice instantly and involuntarily changed and became commanding underneath the blandness. "Go and mix us some cocktails, there's a dear."

The big man turned to obey.

At the door he stopped a moment and surveyed us wistfully.

"Lila's been so eager for you to come," he told me. "I hope you'll stay as long as possible. She's told me what a lot you have in common. About books I mean, and all that, I'm not much company for her in some ways. I never read very much myself. Can't talk to her about the stuff she's interested in. . . . You'll probably find me as dull as she does."

"You're not dull, dear," she told him soothingly. "Though certainly you aren't what one would call highbrow. Most army men aren't."

"Nor army wives," I put in. "If Lila is, it's a new grace. She never used to be."

"Oh, Lila reads everything under

heaven," her husband somewhat bewilderedly insisted.

"Joey, get the cocktails," she murmured almost sharply. "Mr. Faxon isn't interested in all that."

"He's interested in you," the other maintained. "In which respect he's no different from anyone else."

"They're all in love with her up here," he turned to me. "Wherever she goes, they all fall in love with her, after the first week."

"Well," I took him up, almost too quickly, "I shan't do that, fortunately, for me. Because I'm in love already—with someone else."

Lila dropped her long lashes. Her hands clasped and unclasped each other in her lap.

"Engaged?" she wondered.

"No, but so anxious to be if the girl will have me. She's a glorious girl." I looked hopefully at my friend, but for all answer she turned to her husband and this time there was no mistaking the edge in her tone. "Joe-y are you going for those cocktails, or must I?"

"I'm going." And like the same spaniel, that has received a cuff, he slinked away.

IV

My short stay there was so crowded with events that I had little leisure to observe my hostess. She was physically as attractive as ever, as fashionable, as slender. She ran her house with her left hand, so to speak (though with a competence which left nothing to be desired), keeping her right for social activities.

Her husband was perfectly justified in believing that all the officers had fallen in love with her. They had; but what testified even more for her technique, so had their wives. She was *persona grata* everywhere, my-deared and my-darlinged and continually in demand. She had already machinated for her husband the rank of captain and I was sure she would have him a major before the year was out. She

led them all around by their noses, women as well as men, without having sacrificed a jot of her clinging, deprecatory manner. "Dear Colonel Casby," she would murmur, much as she had used to say, "those dear boys."

She kept her sensitive, clever hand on all the strings, never let one of them work free of her, and still played the ingénue.

I soon saw that she had determined to win me, engaged or not engaged, back to the group of her tame robins. And this, not because I could do her any good, or because she gave a continental damn for me. Simply, I was a male.

We went to visit her mother that first afternoon. I found the old lady almost doubled with rheumatism, practically helpless, and from her suppressed moaning, in what I assumed to be continual pain.

Yet during the three days of my stay there, except for occasional flurried visits, her daughter never went near her. To be sure, the one maid attended her from time to time, brought her her meals, dressed her and undressed her, but the poor old thing spent most of her hours alone.

"Here is Mr. Faxon, mother," Lila said crisply on that first visit, pulling out of her mother's hand a sock the latter was darning. The poor soul was evidently trying still to be useful in some manner, in spite of the fact that her hands could hardly manage a needle, from swelling and pain.

"Mother must be always doing something," Lila explained.

Then, as I was bending down near the invalid and murmuring my perfunctory greeting, I noticed the daughter's face go suddenly hard with a look I had seen there once before, the same look she had turned on the child who had spoiled her ribbons.

"Why mother, what in the world were you thinking of? You've darned this with black thread, my best faun colored hose! It has to come out!"

And she wrenched and tore the

threads, making the hole twice as large as it had been.

We didn't stay long, for which I was thankful. The whole situation was too tragic.

"Doesn't your mother suffer a great deal?" I inquired. "She seemed to me to be in constant pain."

"Yes, but it's better not to notice it. A lot of sympathy makes her think about it too much. The doctor warned us against that."

The first evening I was left alone with Lila. Soon after dinner she turned to her husband with her little coaxing, imperious manner:

"Now, Joe-y, go and play your billiards. Mr. Faxon and I have a lot to talk about."

The big man hesitated, looking from one of us to the other.

"Don't go, Houghton," I exclaimed. "Not unless nightly billiards is an institution. Your wife is altogether too clever for me. I need an ally. We men, you know, must stand together."

"I might give up playing tonight, Lila," he hazarded softly.

She smiled at him, her bland, cold smile. "Oh please Joe-y, don't be self-sacrificing. I want this first evening with Mr. Faxon. He's a very old friend, dear. I've told you that. And for the next two nights we shall be rushing round most fearfully. This is my only chance." Then more softly, "He doesn't want you either. He was just trying to say the right thing."

I expected to see the big man explode on this, but instead he only nodded wretchedly.

"All right then. I'll clear out for a while. See you, Faxon, when I get back. By the way," glancing over at his wife, "those new cigarettes are upstairs in my den. Perhaps you'd like them?"

She looked back at him with a mollified, almost tender expression. "No thanks, dear. Don't trouble. If I want them, I'll find them."

The tenderness was evidently too much for him. He came across the

room to her and laid a large, imploring hand on her bare shoulder.

At his movement her brows had contracted and now, at the touch she gave a shiver of the most pronounced disgust, thrusting his hand off. "Oh Joey, please. Your fingers are like ice."

He instantly turned and left the room, wounded to the quick, I think, by her gesture more than her words.

Soon afterwards we heard the front door close behind him.

"You're very cruel," I observed when we were alone.

"Cruel?" she repeated, pretending not to understand, and then intrigued by the suppressed passion of my voice, for I was beside myself with anger, "Oh no; only—practical. You men can't be encouraged. You're spoiled so easily. You're bad enough if one has to see you only now and then. But to live with—you're unbearable, unless you're kept down."

"You're lucky to have a man that you can keep down," I remarked rather huskily, not able yet to keep the rage out of my voice. "Some men might give you trouble."

She laughed. "You, for instance?"

"I would have taken you by both shoulders and shaken you until your teeth rattled."

She laughed again, more musically, and then offered me a cigar. "Oh no, you wouldn't, if you lived with me. I'm very nice to live with when I'm treated well. But when I'm not, I'm nasty. Nastier than any man could ever be."

She picked up a cigarette and lit it. "However, you don't have to live with me. So we needn't quarrel about that."

In spite of my disgust, even my contempt for her, I found her more physically alluring than ever. The years had only improved her. They had given a slightly fuller look to her figure, and to her, a deeper knowledge of how to use it. The gown she wore, the scent, the very postures she took all testified to her finer flair. I think

it should be set down to my credit that feeling all this, I didn't give her so much as an admiring look, neither then nor on either of the two days following. I confronted her with an imperviousness which, before the visit was over, I think almost ruined her disposition. She wasn't accustomed to being resisted. I had usurped her rôle.

She had moved her chair closer, and was leaning toward me now, letting her bare, beautiful arm graze my knee. Her large, brilliant eyes bore down on me steadily.

"Tell me about this girl you want to marry."

I wanted to answer her as her vanity and impertinence deserved. But I couldn't. Because what I really wanted, above everything else, was to take her in my arms. I knew that if I stayed there, I should. So I rose brusquely.

"I'll tell you tomorrow. Tonight I'm so tired. I think if you don't mind, I'll go to bed. You'll explain, won't you, to—Joe?"

She nodded languidly, contriving not to let a shadow of her annoyance escape into her face. This showed me the extent to which she could control herself when she decided to. Her lapses with her husband and her mother were, therefore, deliberate rather than accidental. She felt that she could afford them, and still cancel any disagreeable effect they might have by the sheer force of her physical charm.

"We have breakfast at nine," she informed me as I reached the door, and then, more quietly, "I hope you aren't so tired that you won't be able to sleep."

"If I am," I told her, "I'll come back."

When I got to my room I lighted my pipe and tried to read, but couldn't. My brain was taken up with the thought of Lila sitting downstairs, alone, in the lamplight.

I tried to focus on her brutality, her cruelty, her pitiless selfishness but I

couldn't. The image that my mind inevitably returned to, and circled round without the power to leave it, was that of a lovely, soft-skinned woman clothed in some clinging, cream-coloured stuff, her white arms and shoulders bare with the light full on them, her head and neck in shadow. . . . Why had I been such a stubborn, quixotic fool as to run away?

I don't know how long I had been sitting when I heard her step on the stair. She was coming to bed; she had got bored with being down there alone. She came down the hall and stopped at the door of the room opposite. I heard it open and close and then, presently, the sound of a key, clicking in the lock. I remember thinking at the moment how odd it was that she should bolt her door.

I don't know what time it was, but several hours later certainly, that I heard down the same corridor another tread which I instantly recognized for Houghton's military walk. It stopped in front of his wife's door, and the next instant I heard the muffled sound of a knob scraping, as if it were being tried as noiselessly as possible. Evidently it didn't yield and he gave it up, for presently I heard the faint click of it back into place, and his heavy tread going on up the hall.

V

I LEFT at the end of my three days and have never seen Lila since. A year later I learned in a roundabout way of her mother's death. My last news of her reached me three months ago; the report of her divorce and her subsequent departure for Australia.

Her husband divorced her, according to the account, after coming in one afternoon and finding her established in the lap of some old colonel to whom she was feeding chocolates. I'm sure she considered her husband's resentment as the proof positive of a vulgar-minded literalness of which she had never been able to cure him. It is told of her that she kept her seat, to

the colonel's horrible embarrassment, haughtily surveying her sordid accuser from that vantage point, and after an interval casually explained to him that the poor dear colonel, having been abandoned by his wife for the week-end, had come to her for comfort, and she had simply been trying to brighten him up. I can perfectly imagine her as saying this in her plaintive, patronizing voice and the look of her face as she said it, assured, injured, fatuous.

I think Houghton did his wife a technical injustice. I'd be willing to take my oath on it that her chastity had suffered no suspension. I can conceive of no importunities against which it wouldn't be proof. However, it's possible that Houghton's retort wasn't sprung by jealousy at all but by a totally different motive; such a weariness of the nerves as few men have ever known, and this sudden confrontation as his seemingly God-given

chance to escape. For all her subtlety she had no humour, no shred of realism. She had probably been for a long time over-counting his passion or her own arboreal charm. I suppose the unalleviated transcendental becomes pretty tepid diet for even the most tamed of men.

The only other interesting feature of the episode which I can record is that of Lila's attitude during the divorce proceedings. Rumour has it that she never even to herself relaxed her pose of the righteous, the wronged and the grossly misunderstood. She continued to ignore the weakness of her position with such unflagging and total *regardlessness* that I am told she won a lot of people to her side. It is probably the first instance in history of the success of the ostrich policy. Wherever she is today, I am sure she is still expounding her thesis of the essential depravity and materialism of men.



The Shattered Flower

By George O'Neil

*I have not forgotten that dusk that fell
Like a great flower from the sky,
Drenching gold petals in a sea
Rimmed by purple peaks snow-high.*

*Lifting our eyes to gauge the stars,
Chill dewy flecks upon the flower,
We saw the zenith touch the mountains
And light melt downward for an hour.*

*The carved gold of the beach grew dull,
And darker the sea's pure edges broke;
Petal on petal drifted in,
And frail bells in a valley spoke . . .*



The Princess of Beacon Hill

By Richardson Wright

I

AT the time of her father's death, Charlotte Brooks was headed precipitately for spinsterhood. She was about to be thirty, and no one had ever told her that a woman just begins to be interesting at thirty. She thought it somewhat undignified to make herself too attractive to men. She went in for tweeds and ground-gripper shoes. She pulled her hair straight back and twisted it into a "Wellesley Bun," wore horn-rimmed spectacles openly on the street and was conscious of having a purpose.

Being a native Bostonian these defects were more than offset by all the pleasures Boston offered her. There was the weekly afternoon at the Symphony, there were Professor Kent's lectures on Civic Art at Cambridge and the Monday talks on Current Events at the Plaza. These and an occasional party marked the high tide of her frivolities.

She had time for little else, except the reading of large and serious books. Managing a home for her father—her purpose in life since her mother's death—required time, effort and much thought. Three Irish maids, the house on Newbury Street and the regular meals formed her daily orbit. She saw that there were baked beans regularly on Saturday nights, codfish cakes regularly on Sunday mornings and, in true New England style, she celebrated each 4th of July by serving the first fresh salmon and the first green peas. This culinary regime, inherited from her mother, was maintained without a break.

Her mother's death imposed these re-

sponsibilities upon her at the unfortunate age of twenty-two, the year she was graduated from Wellesley. The transition from college to cuisine was difficult at first, but she managed to take hold. In this she was assisted by the study that her father had indulgently fixed over for her on the top floor.

It was the sort of study a Boston girl should have. Two sides of the room were lined with books; her desk stood between the front windows. The proverbial Boston rubber plant flourished like a green bay tree in one window and the proverbial Boston plaster cast of "Winged Victory" dominated the other. Numerous prints of master paintings ranged above the fireplace. The one indulgence to the flesh was a photograph of Rodin's "The Kiss," quite a Laocöon sort of kiss, you'll remember. Beside the desk—a modern touch—was a typewriter. She managed the three servants, the baked beans, the codfish balls, the salmon and green peas and the other household matters by means of neatly typed and clearly worded schedules on which all the calories and vitamins were calculated to a mathematical nicety.

So much for Charlotte after her mother's death.

Mr. Brooks showed quite the opposite reaction to his wife's departure. The old gentleman promptly took a new lease on life. He began going regularly to New York, a place he always vowed—like most Bostonians—he detested. After a respectable year of mourning he broke forth into plaids and striped ties. He introduced wine on the table, began smoking cigarettes, and took to staying late at his club. At one time gossip even connected his name with a

light young party in the Chestnut Hill section. Altogether, Mr. Henry Brooks did very well by himself, and he died, as you can read on his tombstone, honored and respected, on June 18th, 1910, in his sixty-third year.

This was the general state of affairs one afternoon in late June, 1910. Charlotte Brooks was sitting at her desk, going over her father's private papers. Mr. Campling, an aged attorney with a face like a dried walnut, and little, beady eyes, was at her elbow.

"There is one thing I am rather anxious to find," she said. "It is a genealogy of our branch of the Brooks that father was working on before mother died. At her death he suddenly stopped it, and whenever I asked him to let me see it, he always put me off."

"Perhaps he had not finished it," Mr. Campling suggested.

"I wonder!" She laid down her spectacles and gazed out the window past the rubber plant.

"In his latter years your father rather enjoyed casting an atmosphere of romance and adventure about the things he did." This was putting it mildly; Mr. Campling knew all about his late client's amours.

"I thought perhaps there might have been some ancestor," Charlotte spoke without looking around, "whose reputation was not all that it should have been."

"Oh, never!" Mr. Campling was visibly shocked. "A thing like that never happened to a Brooks. Never a breath of scandal. Remember, they were Puritans."

"Are you sure?" Charlotte turned on him. She had heard vague rumors of her father's interest in the Chestnut hill section and had even faced him with them. He blustered her off.

"Very sure, my dear girl. Of course, in his younger days, your father was a great beau." He gestured affably, and began rustling the papers. "But you really shouldn't bother your head about such matters. You should think of other things—your future, travel, perhaps marriage."

"Marriage!" She shrugged and looked away. "There's little chance of that."

"Nonsense!" Mr. Campling threw back his head and snorted. "Why not marry? You are a pretty girl. You are young. You are very comfortably fixed. You have no immediate ties or responsibilities. It is natural, it is only fair to yourself to contemplate marrying. Come, come! Your dear father would never talk that way!"

"Father was different." She shook her head and put on the spectacles again. "Perhaps he inherited from some ancestor a gayer outlook on life than I have. There may have been someone in the past who didn't quite belong to the Puritan strain."

"Well, for a New Englander," Mr. Campling's beady eyes twinkled, "for the descendant of an early Colonist, for the heir of those stern men who ran the clipper ships out of Salem, yes, I would say that your father did have an unusually happy outlook on life."

He plucked up one of the papers and smiled slyly over it at her. "Who knows but what you, too, have inherited some of the same gaiety!"

It was a valiant attempt, but Charlotte was unaffected. Behind those horn-rimmed spectacles her eyes showed no reaction. He turned to the papers again and for several moments thumbed them over.

"Ah, this must be it!" Mr. Campling pulled an envelope from the pile. "'The Genealogy of Henry Brooks'."

She broke the seal and emptied the contents. Across the first sheet sprawled the limbs of the Brooks' family tree. A letter and a page of notes in her father's handwriting were with it.

"Yes, now we'll see!"

Mr. Campling rose. "If that is all, Charlotte, I think I had better get back to the bank with these papers before it closes."

She saw him out and ran upstairs to her study again.

The names in the last three generations were familiar. Those Brooks had

been very much of the woof and warp of early New England history; they were a respectable heritage and she was proud of them.

From Boston the line crossed back to England, to Penshurst in Kent. Yes, she had often heard her father say that their Brooks came from Kent. That was perfectly clear. So far she found no mystery, no ancestor whose reputation was not all that it should be.

Suddenly her eye fell on

James Brooks—Olga Ivanovna Gilitsin

"Gilitsin?" She uttered a little cry.

An asterisk beside Olga Gilitsin's name led to an envelope marked "The Gilitsin Connection." Her father had written:

"When Peter the Great of Russia came to England in 1697 to acquire European culture and, incidentally, to learn the making of ships, there was in his entourage a Cossack prince, Ivan Dmitrivitch Gilitsin. He also studied ship building with his royal master, a fact that I would like to think had some subsequent bearing on the interest of the Brooks in ship building during the Salem clipper days. With Gilitsin was his daughter Olga. While on a visit to the Brooks' estate at Penshurst, Olga Ivanovna Gilitsin met and fell in love with James Brooks, the eldest son. They were married. Of their issue a son, John, came to Boston as a lad in the year 1715. The head of our Brooks, then, was the son of an English gentleman and a Cossack maiden."

For a moment Charlotte looked straight ahead. Could it be true? She opened the letter.

It was dated from St. Petersburg and signed "Gilitsin." A long, chatty letter such as one old man might write another. Gilitsin traced his side of the family back to the original prince who accompanied Peter the Great. He also spoke of his own family, his son, the heir to the title, Dmitri, a lad of nineteen, then attending the university. The letter closed with an invitation to Mr. Brooks to visit Russia.

Charlotte let the letter slip from her fingers.

"That would make Dmitri twenty-nine now," she mused, glancing at the date of the letter again. "Ump! And father found this all out the year mother died."

For a long time she sat crouched up in her chair, her eyes fixed on the opposite wall.

"So that's where father got his gayer outlook on life." There was an echo of irony in her tone, "his romance, his sense of adventure—he was part Cossack."

Suddenly she flung down her spectacles and turned wildly on "Winged Victory." Her hand crashed against the plaster. It rocked, toppled and went thundering to the floor.

"Merciful Heavens," she shouted, "I'm part Cossack too!"

II

BUT the next moment she had recovered herself. She contemplated the broken fragments of "Winged Victory" and her New England conscience bit its way into her being. She had been very silly. She should have a better grip on her emotions. It was not womanly to go off the handle like that. What if this whole affair was a gigantic fraud, her New England bump of caution asked? What if the Gilitsins were only a run-down family snatching at this method to recoup themselves? More than one American—she had read of it in the papers—had been taken in by just such flim-flams.

She brushed up the fragments of "Winged Victory" with a determined, housewifely air. She didn't want them around accusing her. She even took the pieces herself to the cellar, so that none of the servants would see, and she had already made up the explanation she would give them of how the statue got broken.

For the present she must forget the whole affair. Perhaps tomorrow she might examine it further—go to the Public Library and look up the Gilitsins

in the Almanac de Gotha. If they were genuine, they would be listed there.

And as it was now close on to four o'clock and the affair of the broken statue annoyed her to the point where she did not care to stay in the study any longer, she went out for tea. Ordinarily she would have dropped in on a friend; today her feet led her almost instinctively to a little tea room close by the Public Library. She had tea alone. The solitude depressed her. Besides, she was trying not to think of the Gilitsins. But whenever she recalled what Mr. Campling said about her getting married, she couldn't help thinking of the Gilitsins. Finally, in sheer desperation, as if pushed into it by an invisible hand, she crossed the street and entered the library.

"I would like to see the Almanac de Gotha," she said to the young woman behind the desk.

"The latest copy we have is 1908," the librarian answered. "Will that do?"

Charlotte said it would and began thumbing the pages.

In a moment she had reached the spot. Yes, there the name was—Gilitsin. And the young prince had been born in 1881. She closed the book.

"The Almanac de Gotha does not lie," she murmured determinedly, and stiffening her back, turned out of the building.

So it was true. The Gilitsins were actual people. She was very gratified to find it out. They belonged to the nobility—and she was one of them!

The fact burst on her like a fury. She—Charlotte Brooks was of the Cossack nobility! She quickened her step and plunged into the crowd. Her heels fairly thumped the pavement.

There was no disregarding the truth. This was a fact—she was part Cossack—and every bit of her New England training had taught her to face facts.

That night she had a glass of claret with her dinner and smoked a cigarette, smoked it boldly and unashamed before the servants. The rest of the evening she spent composing a letter to Prince Gilitsin. She had the maid run

out to the post box with it, lest it miss the last collection.

The following week she went to New York and spent a prodigious sum—for a Bostonian—on fashionable mourning. The girl in the hat shop remarked that it was almost impossible to fit her properly with her present coiffure, and suggested something more elaborate than the "Wellesley Bun." Charlotte stopped on the way down Fifth Avenue and had the first permanent wave of her life. She also bought a complete set of make-up.

On her return to Boston friends began to wonder what had come over her. Between the new clothes, the new coiffure and the new color in her cheeks, death certainly had lost its sting.

Her interest in Civic Art and Current Events flagged perceptibly. She missed one or two talks and then dropped the courses altogether. Instead, she read Russian history, went to hear Russian music, ate up Russian art, talked Russia to anyone who would listen and even let it be known that she had Russian blood in her veins—Cossack blood at that. Being of the Ruling Classes, however, her sympathy was with the aristocracy. She thought the revolutionists quite impossible.

Upon this soil so prepared and hungry for seed, imagine the effect of Gilitsin's reply! It was written in precise, academic English. The prince detailed the facts of his father's death, of his present residence in St. Petersburg where he was continuing some studies and, he assured her, that should she ever come to Russia she would be most hospitably welcomed. Of course, it wasn't exactly what you would call a cordial letter; but who would expect cordiality in the first reply? However, he must surely have meant his invitation.

Although it would be winter in Russia by the time she reached there, she didn't see any reason why she shouldn't go. She dismissed the three servants, covered her typewriter, put back her books of calories, and announced her

departure for an indefinite stay in Europe. What she wrote the Prince was that, by the rarest good fortune, she did happen to be coming to the Continent this winter, and, if she could possibly arrange it, she would go to St. Petersburg.

Possibly arrange it? . . . She had never been so bold in her life.

The letter of credit she took positively appalled Mr. Campling. However, he recovered enough to say that she was a chip off the old block. And she started to prove it in Paris.

She took rooms at an hotel near the Etoile and forthwith delivered herself into the hands of couturieres, milliners, glovers, perfumers and the creators of fine lingerie.

Yet there was something grim in the way she went about assembling this wardrobe. Her intuitions told her that she would meet with stiff competition. She asked several friends in Paris what Russian women were like, and their reports were far from encouraging. It seemed that the female of the species in Muscovy were past masters of the art of intrigue, that they wore their clothes with an incomparable air and that they were merciless to rivals. If she—she of Boston—was going to make the slightest impression on her young Prince, she must not count the expense in Paris.

Fifty, sixty, a hundred thousand francs! That was a good bit of money in 1910, but she never begrudged a sou of it, nor the hours standing in draughty dressmaker's being fitted, nor the scorn of the manikins, nor the sickening blandishments of the vendeuses. Gradually her hotel bedroom filled with boxes and parcels. Each morning the concierge staggered upstairs with an armful and every other day or so a new trunk appeared.

When she had filled five trunks and three hat boxes, not to forget a Victoria case of miscellaneous jewelry, she decided that she was about ready for Russia. She wired the Prince the date of her coming, waited until she had his assurances of welcome and the advice

that she would be met on the platform at St. Petersburg, and then bought her ticket for the Nord Express.

This was just six months from the time she was issuing those baked beans and codfish cake ultimatums from her top-story desk.

One might say many things about this metamorphosis; one might say that hope springs eternal beneath a Wellesley Bun, that even tweeds and ground grippers have an available future. But let's let charity begin at homeliness. Charlotte Brooks started out at homeliness; by the time she stepped on the Nord Express, she had no need for charity. Gone the tweeds, gone the flat heels, gone the horn-rimmed spectacles and the calories. Gone even her New England conscience. When she boarded that train she was as lovely a little bit of fluff as ever disturbed the sight of man.

In the mode of the era she wore a traveling suit of blue broadcloth trimmed with fur. Her toque, from which floated a new and expensive veil, also was bound with fur. From beneath it strayed curly wisps of hair that crowned a complexion any Parisian specialist might be proud of. Her eyebrows were penciled into perfect arches; there was a subtle darkening about her eyes from which their light flashed with enticing brilliance. She had found her lips to be an alluring bow, and made them more so with carmine. The odor of white roses floated in her wake.

And in her mind floated a fairy dream. Oh, such a pleasant dream! She saw him—a towering figure in uniform. Perhaps he had a moustache; maybe a beard. She hoped it wouldn't be a beard. He wore the plum colored, skirted kaftan of his Cossack tribe, with its rows of dummy silver bullets from shoulder to shoulder and its jeweled dagger suspended from a silver chain at his waist. His boots shone like mirrors. He wore his black sheepskin cap at a rakish angle, and he strode along with the firm purpose of the unconquered.

Her Prince!

III

FROM Paris to Berlin she dreamed of him—she saw him striding toward her down the station platform. Away back of the beyond in her dreams burned the faint adumbration of a secret hope . . . Russian princes had been known to fall in love with American girls.

Then—on the station platform at Wirballem she experienced a strange excitement.

Passing the Russian customs had been exciting enough in itself. Stepping through the barrier into that vast, mysterious Muscovy sent thrills running up and down her spine. She was quite ready for anything now.

Standing in the midst of her luggage as the St. Petersburg train slowly backed into the shed, she glanced around at her fellow passengers. Already the East was beginning to show itself in the strange costumes of Tartars and Moslems. The uniforms of the soldiers was strange. The babble of strange talk on all sides left her silent and impressed. For the fraction of a second she began to weaken. Had she the courage to see it through?

She looked about, as if for someone who, by glance or motion, would strengthen her wavering determination.

"Oh!" she uttered, and stifled the "oh" with her hand.

Standing quite close to her, looking in a way that seemed half to recognize, half to doubt her, was her Prince! He was exactly the man she dreamed Gilitzin would be—a Cossack, a towering figure in a plum colored kaftan and with his black sheepskin cap at a rakish angle. The rows of dummy silver bullets glistened from shoulder to shoulder. At his waist a jeweled dagger was suspended from a silver chain. His boots shone like mirrors. From out the blur came his face—ruddy and strong. No, he did not have a beard!

She saw him move, as if to make a gesture of recognition. Just then the porter came up and cut off her vision. She was bundled aboard the train.

Could it be possible? Had he come

all the way to the frontier to meet her?

She sank back on the cushions of her compartment and let the bliss of that thought flood her. If it were he, of course he would come aboard the train. It would have been easy for him to check up her name at the passport desk in the customs office.

So excited was she that she did not feel the train moving. It began to gather speed. She glanced out the window and then back at the door. The door had not opened. She turned again to the window. Perhaps it was very silly of her to think him Gilitzin. She tried to make herself interested in the scenery. Ahead of her lay Russia—vast, incomprehensible, alluring. She kept her eyes on the panorama that unrolled itself,—the snow-sheeted landscape, the frozen smoke that rose stiff and straight from the chimneys in the still morning air. So this was Russia, this bleak, colorless . . .

So engrossed was she that she did not notice voices in the corridor. The door of the compartment opened. It was he.

"I trust you will permit my intrusion on your privacy," he said in halting English, as he removed his cap. "The train is very full."

"You are quite welcome, I am sure," she managed, and turned away as he slung his bag up into the rack.

When she looked around again he was seated opposite her.

"The guard said I was going to have the privilege of traveling with an American lady," he remarked after a moment. "Is this your first visit to Russia?"

"Yes, the first." Her answer came out quite precisely. She hoped he didn't see how nervous she was.

"And you've come all the way from . . .?"

"From New England. From Boston, if you know where that is." What a silly thing to have said! Of course, he knew where Boston was.

"Yes, indeed." He gave his moustache a twist. "That is where the Puritans went to. Do any come away from there?"

She acknowledged his *bon mot* with a smile.

"One has, at least. Although I scarcely can call myself entirely a Puritan," she added. His expression seemed to change at this; she thought she saw his glance take her in. "I've relatives in Russia," she concluded.

"American relatives?"

The abruptness of that question suddenly alarmed her. Why should he cross-question her that way? Was it the custom of the country? When she looked directly at him there seemed no guile in his expression. He was obviously awaiting her reply. Oh well, she would give him a little run for his game before she finally told him who she was.

"No, not American, Russian relations," she answered smiling. "I am a Puritan, but I am also part Cossack."

"Ah, that explains it!" He made a sweeping gesture. "When first you said you came from Boston I could not understand how one with such eyes could be a Puritan."

His frankness sent the blushes to her cheeks.

"No, I mean it. Your eyes burn as with fire. They are vibrant. Your gestures are tense with that longing a Cossack feels when he is away from his favorite horse and the boundless steppes."

"Yes?" She leaned forward.

He shrugged, as if words would not express his feeling. "Ah well, now we understand each other. Cossack speaks to Cossack." He fell back in his seat.

For a moment neither of them spoke. They listened to the click and singing of the wheels.

"You are evidently going to St. Petersburg, too," she finally ventured. This time she would ask the questions.

He nodded.

"But I thought you said you were a Cossack. Do Cossacks belong in a city like St. Petersburg?"

"If their home happens to be there." He apparently saw nothing unusual in her question. "I am a Cossack, a Don Cossack and my father before me and his father, and so on back to the time of

Peter the Great. Still, my home is in St. Petersburg."

"Then perhaps you know the relatives I am going to visit," she said. "They, too, are Cossack—the Gilitsins, Prince Gilitsin."

Of a sudden his eyes flashed. She seemed to read a light of comprehension in them. He leaned forward again.

"What did you say your name was?"

"Brooks, Charlotte Brooks."

"Mademoiselle, permit me."

He jumped to his feet, took her hand and kissed its finger tips.

"Gilitsin considers this the crowning hour of his life," he whispered.

"But you, you are . . . ?"

He nodded and took her hand again.

Could it be possible? Did such coincidences actually happen? Just as she had dreamed he would be! She fell back against the seat and closed her eyes. If she could only say something worthy of that moment! Finally she took refuge in a banal remark.

"It was very kind of you to come all the way down to the frontier to meet me."

"Not at all." He shrugged good naturedly. "You see, I reserved it for a surprise. Russia will have many surprises for you. You are not yet accustomed to what a Russian will do."

She closed her eyes again. The rails started their refrain once more. She never could have hoped for what had happened—and here, it had happened! And yet, even as she palpitated with the very bliss of the thought, a devastating fear began to creep over her. Back from a dim past came her Bostonian caution. What if he wasn't Gilitsin? What if he were an impostor? He might have learned who she was from the customs officials at Wirballen and seeing that she traveled alone, was designing against her. She stiffened against the seat and opened her eyes.

"Why did you not know that I was Miss Brooks when you first came in?" she asked calmly.

"Ah, that bothers you! I am sorry! I did not explain." He gestured reassuringly. "In Russia we have to be

very careful. Especially one in my position. I am colonel of a Cossack regiment, as you see, and we Cossacks are not always liked. There are many impostors. We also have our bitter enemies, men and women. We always make it a practice to reassure ourselves against eventualities. I assured myself of your being Miss Brooks at Wirbalen. When I boarded the train I asked the guard for your compartment. I did not introduce myself until I was sure you were indeed Miss Brooks. Forgive this unusual caution, forgive what may seem to you my inordinate curiosity, but in Russia one must."

"Perhaps I should have been just as cautious with you" she countered.

"Then we never would have gotten to know each other!" He caught her blushing and laughed. "But you mustn't think I am going to take advantage of you."

"Oh, no, I didn't mean that, only . . ." But she was hopelessly confused. She blushed furiously and finally concluded:

"Please forget my being so silly."

She turned away to the window. The scene was very monotonous—snow to the horizon, here and there a grove of birch, their naked bodies shivering in the icy wind.

"So far Russia may seem an unlovely place to you," he remarked. "I hope that St. Petersburg will more than compensate for this dreary waste we are riding through. However, it will not be so very much longer."

"Yes, I am anxious to arrive," she answered. "I feel as though I were coming back to something, to someone who belongs to me and to which I belong. When you invited me, I was thrilled—and yet I felt as though I was coming to it naturally, as to my own home."

"That is just as you should feel." There was a softness to his tone that pleased her ear. "You have not yet experienced Russian hospitality. Wait! You will never have dreamed it can be so charming, so gay, so brilliant." He leaned forward so that his fingers al-

most touched hers. "When you do, you will understand what it really means to be a Russian. We live life to the full, we Russians! We laugh, we sing, we dance! We love beautiful women. And . . ." as his finger tips touched hers, a thrill ran through her, "and we know Romance!"

A quiet peace began to steal over her. She was happy that she had found him. But even more happy was she that she had pleased him. She was glad she had on that new suit and hat. She hoped he liked her veil. She had never so much experienced the sensation of being admired. It made her feel rich and luscious and vital.

She told him long stories of her girlhood, of her father, of their home in Boston, of her college days, of her mother. And he returned with tales of his youth, stirring escapades when he was a lad in training, of his petty love affairs, his romantic adventures.

The hours sped on. They had luncheon together in the compartment. All afternoon they played piquet. Dusk found them approaching St. Petersburg.

"We will be there in half an hour," he said.

She smiled, and asked him to hand down her fur coat. He was solicitous about her baggage, explaining that it would be delivered safely to her hotel. She put on her gloves.

The houses grew closer together. The train's speed began to slacken. People started moving about the corridor.

A guard opened the door. "Tickets and passports, please." He carried a list in his hand.

Charlotte presented her papers and ticket. They were duly checked off and the passport returned.

He reached out for the other, pocketed the ticket, scanned the passport and handed it back.

"Colonel Menikoff," he said aloud, checking off the name.

"Meni. . ." Charlotte gasped. She saw him go red. The guard stepped into the corridor. As he did so she caught at the passport. Yes, there it

was in black and white. She spelled out the Russian characters—Stephan Petrovitch Menikoff. She flung it back at him. "How do you explain this?" she demanded.

IV

"MADEMOISELLE, there are many things a man will do for a beautiful woman," he replied, "and what I have done is even the least of them."

"But you have deceived me, you have told a lie." Every bit of her New England conscience was surging up in her.

"Ah, you are angry, and anger does not befit you! What would you have me do?" He spread pleading hands. "I asked who you were and you told me. Under those circumstances could I resist saying that I was the Prince Gilitsin? Think! You with your eyes of smouldering fire! Had I resisted the temptation I should not have been human."

"Human? Stuff and nonsense! You've lied to me, you've cruelly deceived me. You took advantage of a woman traveling alone in a strange country. Don't talk to me about being human. You're not human. You're a nasty, disgusting man!"

"I am sorry I have disappointed you," he said dejectedly.

"It is quite immaterial to me whether you have or not," she snapped out.

Suddenly he leaned toward her, thumping his breast. "Listen, *Deshunka!* In my blood runs the wild desire of the Cossack. I am made for war and for love, as all my forebears were. It would have been a poor compliment to you, a stranger in my native land, had I failed to give you of the finest in me, my admiration."

He watched her eyes. In them he seemed to read a relenting.

He caught at her arm. "What did you expect of me?"

She pushed his hand away and stiffened. "Certainly not deceit."

"What did you expect the Prince Gilitsin to be like?" he pursued.

"I do not see that that has anything to do with you."

"Ah, yes, but what did you expect?"

He caught at her arm again. She sat crouched back in her corner, her head bowed so that he could not see her face. "You have come all the way from America to see your Prince. Haven't you wondered what he was like? Haven't you formed a picture in your mind of the man you want him to be?"

His tone was sarcastic. Sarcasm on top of insult!

"Don't be cruel!" she cried.

"I know you have!" He patted her arm. "If you have the Cossack blood in you, you have dreamed of a Cossack—a warrior, resplendent in his uniform, a great lover, passionate in his devotion."

"Please stop! Please . . ." She raised her head. Tears stood in her eyes.

"You are a Cossack enough to understand," he whispered. "The Cossack in you has broken through the Puritan shackles. You were a Cossack the moment I stepped into your presence. I read it in your eyes. It was as clear as dawn on the steppes. You were the Cossack maid eager for her lover."

She pulled herself away from him and stiffened again. "I do not care to discuss that with you."

"But in Russia you must choose between the two. Which will you be? Miss Charlotte Brooks, Puritan? Or Charlotte Brooks, Cossack, coming back to claim the free life that is yours by heritage?"

She bit her lip and looked out the window. No man had ever spoken to her that way before. She was overwhelmed. She despised him, and yet, what could she do? She felt engulfed, overcome, helpless.

The train was slowing down. People hurried along the corridor. The cars drew under the span of the station roof.

"In America," she said as precisely as she could, "a man under these circumstances would apologize."

"In Russia," he countered with equal precision, "he would do no such thing. He would demand that she do what her heart dictates. Which are you to be, Puritan? Or Cossack?"

She got to her feet without replying and moved toward her bag. He caught her by the arms and held her fast. "If you are a Cossack . . ."

"Please let me go."

With a sudden rush he seized her hands and drew her close to him. "Tonight I am dining at the Café Paris on the Nevski. I shall go there directly from the train. If you are a Puritan, you will not come. If you are a Cossack, if the Cossack blood truly stirs in you, *Deshunka*, you will be there."

"But Gilitsin is on the platform." She narrowed her eyes. "And I shall certainly tell him."

"Why cannot you leave word that you will be here on the train that arrives at ten o'clock? After we've had dinner, you can go back to your hotel." He shrugged nonchantly. "Then you can see him tomorrow morning."

"Ah, the infamy of your even suggesting such a thing!" She drew away from him.

He smiled and put on his cap. "The Café Paris. . . The Nevski."

The next moment he was gone.

V

SHE dropped back on the seat exhausted. Outrageous! To think that this should happen to her, her of all girls! She despised herself for being so gullible. What a fool to have told him so much about herself! Naturally he took advantage of her. She recalled what Mr. Campling had said that afternoon—that there was never a breath of scandal against a Brooks.

A porter came in for her bag. She handed it to him listlessly. She was too confused to hear what he was saying. She waved him away.

But she couldn't stay there. That was certain. She must get off. But could she possibly meet Gilitsin with her eyes all red and her hat askew?

She glanced at herself in the mirror between the windows. No, her eyes weren't so red. She tucked in a whisp of hair and powdered her nose. Then she gave her eyebrows a touch and put some carmine on her lips.

"Now we'll see what that ancestor really does look like," she remarked as she turned toward the door. She was determined that Menikoff should not escape, she would see to it that Gilitsin had him broken for his insolence. Stephan Petrovitch Menikoff. Yes she had the name perfectly. She stepped into the corridor.

There seemed to be a good bit of confusion on the platform. In the dim light from the overhead lamps she could see that gendarmes were hurrying the people along. Finally a space was cleared. It was a green space, a green carpet. A baytree in a wooden box stood at each corner.

Then a number of people began to appear on the carpet and look toward her car—several men in silk hats, two or three in uniform and a woman. To the front of the group stepped a little man, a stoup-shouldered, little, young man wearing an uncomfortable silk hat. His slanting eyes blinked behind thick glasses. And, making him even more grotesque, he carried in his hand a large, stiff bunch of yellow Russian sunflowers bound around with wedding cake paper.

"They are waiting for you."

She glanced up. It was Menikoff. He had her bag. And he stood in the way.

"Please let me pass," she demanded. "And give me my bag."

"The Prince Gilitsin is the one holding the bouquet," Menikoff continued, disregarding her plea. She turned her back on him, and turning her back had no way to look but out the window. "The station was ordered to have the carpet and ceremonial attendants for the reception of one of the nobility." His tone was even and unperturbed. "The Prince Gilitsin, I forgot to tell you, is an instructor in Sanscrit at the University."

At first she could not quite grasp what he was saying. She loathed the man and yet, and yet she wanted to laugh. Was it possible that this queer little fellow with the big spectacles was her Prince? A professor of Sanscrit!

"The woman beside him," Menikoff continued, "is the Princess Gilitsin."

She had not noticed her at first. She was standing to one side, talking with one of the gentlemen. A young woman, quite interesting looking, although not dressed with any distinction.

She was fascinated by her delusion.

So this was what she had crossed the seas and the continent to meet! This was the man she had spent a fortune for in Paris! This was her dream Prince, her handsome lover, this married, run-down, tag-end of a noble family. But he had not told her he was married! She resented that. He had deceived her. And the thought of it so annoyed her that she quite forgot that Menikoff was by her side.

"Shall we go now?" he broke in on her thoughts.

She turned and followed him obediently, down the corridor and onto the platform. The next moment she was surrounded. Silk hats were doffed. Soldiers came to salute. The prince approached and bowed obsequiously to her. The princess greeted her effusively. As Charlotte met the eyes of the Princess, she caught the sudden fire of wild beauty, the flash and flame of life. Yes, of her type, she was a fascinating woman. Intrigue was there, and the sharp, swift parry of jealous wit. Menikoff, too, they greeted. Everyone seemed to know him.

"We trust that you can come with us to our home?" she heard the prince say.

"That is so kind, but . . ."

"Perhaps the journey has fatigued her," the princess prompted.

"Yes, it has been quite fatiguing," she took the cue. "I had intended going directly to my hotel, The Victoria, for tonight."

"Then we can expect you tomorrow, perhaps," the prince said.

"Yes, for luncheon," the princess cut in.

"Yes, luncheon," the prince echoed.

"And Colonel Menikoff, too," the princess added, in a tone that seemed to take romance for granted. The prince glanced up at the colonel towering above Charlotte and smiled slyly.

"I shall be delighted," and the colonel bowed.

Charlotte turned about. Menikoff was beaming. He no longer held her bag. "I have spoken to the porter about your luggage," he whispered. "It has been sent to your hotel. You can if you wish, go directly to the Café Paris."

She turned her back on him again. The effrontery of the man!

They began to move toward the stairs. The prince extended his arm. Menikoff conducted the princess.

At the foot of the stairs was a sled and the prince and Menikoff bundled her into it. As the prince stepped back, Menikoff gave the fur rug its final tuck under her feet. She glanced down at him. Their eyes met.

"The Princess is quite beautiful, isn't she?" he remarked.

She did not reply. She merely drew back against the cushions and thanked him with a stiff bow. Then for the fraction of a second there was an awkward pause. The driver leaned forward for his instructions.

"The Café Paris," she said.



Not Guilty

By Llewelyn Powys

NO, I have never deceived a living man but, by Jove! I came near doing so on one occasion.

I was staying in a Swiss sanatorium, in one of those colossal oblong buildings fretted with balconies that look so square and incongruous on the mountainside. Life in such places is intolerable.

Day after day I did nothing and thought of nothing; one was in the world and yet not in the world, forsaken, abandoned, on its topmost ledge. It is in these huge hospitals for the rich that half the degenerates of Europe congregate, hoping to eke out an ebbing and worthless vitality. With such people as companions my existence was insufferable. If I went for a walk there was never anything to be seen, the landscape was always the same—fir trees and perpetual snow-covered mountains—that was all. As for the Swiss peasantry—I loathed them; they seemed to me to spend all their time smoking monstrous pipes, yodelling grotesquely and leading from chalet to chalet ridiculous mouse-coloured cows.

Yet even in sanatoriums there may still be found one consolation—for women also, luckily for us, sometimes fall sick. I was not seriously ill and had good prospects of returning to England for the summer months; yet, even so, I cast my eye round for some girl who might enliven the wretchedness of my exile.

I had reached that moment in a young man's life when the desire for amorous adventure is overwhelming, when he can think of nothing else and is ready to follow up any acquaintanceship that seems at all promising.

Well, one day, as I was resting on a green sanatorium seat half-way along the mountain path, another Englishman came up and seated himself at my side. He, poor devil, was very ill. How he had managed to walk so far I don't know: report said that he suffered from a weak heart and might die at any time. After a fit of coughing he told me he had just received a letter from his wife, saying she was coming to him. He could speak only in a whisper because the disease had attacked his throat, but even so I seemed to detect in his utterance that particular kind of pride which belongs to a man who has secured for himself a beautiful and superior woman.

He himself was not a gentleman. He had made his money by manufacturing boots—brown boots—which he had always assured us were the best in the market.

We treated him abominably, with the silent insolence which the upper classes adopt toward inferiors who happen to stray amongst them. He was made to feel out of it, I can tell you.

When I was introduced to his wife I certainly thought her an amazing person. I shall never forget the look in her eyes as we shook hands—a look that seemed to estimate my capacity for giving her diversion—a look provocative, defiant, and at the same time ironic. She belonged to the spoilt pussy-cat type, to the type of women who have no soul and who strangle men daily with languid caresses.

That very evening when "her old man," as she called him, had gone to bed, we sat talking together in the vestibule. She had evidently taken a fancy

to me, for she was extraordinary gracious.

"I know your thoughts," her eyes seemed to say. "You find me attractive—very well then, be bold and treacherous and you shall have me." Even to this day I recall the intoxicating aura of her presence, dressed as she was in silk of Prussian blue that rustled at her least movement and had about it the faint, delicious fragrance of a lady's toilet.

As the days passed I fell more and more under her spell: the tedium of my life vanished—vanished, as it always does vanish, when one is attracted by a woman. She completely fascinated me. Her feminine wit, her chance expressions, her lovely attitudes—I could not resist them.

You know how the personality of a clever woman finds expression for itself in all the petty incidents of daily life. It was so with her—she was always charming. At meal times I would sometimes look across to her table, but with laughing eyes she always contrived to hide behind a vase of tulips. I can never see these flowers in the beds at home without thinking of her exquisite and perfidious beauty.

The manufacturer was obviously flattered by the impression his wife had made and would ask me up to his rooms to drink coffee and liqueurs before we settled down to our afternoon's rest. He used on these occasions to make pathetic efforts to forget the misery of his predicament, but all the time as he whispered and laughed his features wore that curious harassed expression which I have noticed before on the faces of dying consumptives.

I have seen scores of consumptives like him. They become unaccountably preoccupied, their souls seem to sling to the remotest corners of their bodies, reappearing only at the rarest intervals to wave wild, supplicating hands out of the windows of their eyes. His wife would often rally him and call him stupid because of his depression. Her incapacity to understand the bitterness of his situation was a constant astonish-

ment to me. It is no joke for a man who has lived only for the world and its ways suddenly to find himself dying, to realize all in a moment the ghastly and fatal conditions which regulate human existence.

Yet the slightest allusions to the graver aspects of his case were deliberately and persistently ignored. One day after luncheon she asked me up to coffee as usual. Her husband had not been down that morning and she assured me that my presence would cheer him up.

"His temper and temperature are both out of order," she added with a laugh.

I opened the lift door and we ascended together, getting out at the third *étage* and walking down the corridor to my friend's room. We opened the double doors and found it empty. Thinking he might have gone out on to the balcony, she called his name. There was no answer. A friend of his occupied a room opposite and we concluded that he was paying him a visit.

It was the first time we had been in the room alone with each other.

Our eyes met. I touched her hand; she did not take it away. I took her into my arms; she did not resist. Except for the sound of our kisses we were absolutely silent—silent with that strange half-human silence that overtakes lovers when for the first time they abandon themselves.

Then suddenly, in the midst of those tremulous and passionate embraces, I experienced an uncanny sensation of there being another presence in the room with us—I was sure of it! I was convinced we were not alone!

I turned my head.

The doors leading on to my balcony were ajar and through the narrow open space I could see the end of my friend's couch. Judge, then, of my horror, on catching sight of one of the well-known brown boots! He had been there all the time and had perhaps been a witness of our illicit love! What were we to do?

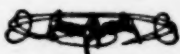
My companion rose and went toward the balcony. From the hard lines on her

pretty face I understood that she meant to brazen it out. She pulled open the doors.

"Now!" she said, and there was mocking cruelty in her voice. "Now,

that we and the coffee are ready I'll call in my old man."

But she need not have been facetious, she need have said nothing, for her old man was dead!



The Rogue of Many Words

By A. Newberry Choyce

AI made rare sport of me,
The rogue of many words
That sits by the water-gate and breeds
Big crimson talking-birds.

"La!" he said, "and what is Life?"
And, "I cannot tell," said I;
And the bird-man winked at the silly folk
That cackled going by.

"La!" he said, "and what is Death?"
And, "Alas, who knows?" I said;
And Ai feigned that I was o'er-young
And should be well abed.

So, "What is Love, O Wise?" I asked
As boldly as you please;
But Ai was stiller than the moon
In the yellow lemon trees.



FAME may be likened to the *croix de guerre* of life. Success, to ownership
of a munitions factory



LOVE is like Niagara. Marriage, like letting down an awning after a rain storm.



Middle-Age

By Morris Christie

RANDALL VAUGHAN had often wondered why there are so many kinds of middle-age without in any way connecting this phenomenon with the different kinds of youth he knew. He worked out his theories from the observations he had made of women. Men were either his age, which was twenty-two, or they weren't. His mother's middle-age had some quality of timelessness about it. She was still the young mother he could remember from his cuddling days. She was wise as old people sometimes are. Hers was the most preferable kind of middle-age. Then there was Carrie Jones, who came to do the scrubbing. She was hopelessly middle-aged, as though fate had played her no end of a bad trick when it passed her by very early. She had faded, tired eyes that would never see anything young again, and she slobbered the scrub brush over the floor as if nothing in the world mattered anyway. Then there was Lura White's kind of middle-age. It puzzled Randall more than the others. He knew she hated it and tried by various artifices to conceal it. He couldn't discover that she had many of the characteristics, although she coddled her health, and didn't play any of the games but bridge. Her husband traveled for something or other, and in his absence she spent the time turning over her house to young people.

Randall and Florence Perrine had occupied Lura's mulberry velvet divan more than any other couple that winter. Preceding pairs of boys and girls had come and gone. Randall wondered how any of them could cease to enjoy the cozy hospitality she offered.

The room was always soft-shaded and bright at the same time. There were shadows, but they were only mirages, that vanished as soon as Lura came into the room. And she did not stay in the room too much of the time. She drifted in with tulle fluffing around her, and the sparkle of rhinestone buckles calling attention to her little feet. She started her guests to laughing over some less innocent joke than usually merited their approval, and then she left them for a little while, but came back to say that there were sandwiches and cakes in the silver basket on her buffet.

It was the night before Florence started to Kentucky for a two weeks' visit that she and Randall stopped in to tell Lura good-bye. Lura met them at the door herself. She had moved the rhinestone buckles to her shoulders, where they held narrow straps of crimson velvet, and their lights flashed up to her black hair. Randall couldn't imagine how anyone her age could look so young.

"You're a dear, Ranny, to bring Floy the night before she goes away."

"We wanted to tell you good-bye," Florence said without unfastening her coat.

"But you're to stay all evening."

"No, we just ran in—"

"And leave me here all by my lone—when I've been alone all day?"

"I understood mother to say she saw you at Irene's for lunch," Florence said.

"Oh, that—I just stopped in for a hurried bite, but everybody acted so old. I count it being alone unless I'm with someone who feels as young as I do.

You two are so stimulating. Young life is all that counts."

There was reluctance in the gesture with which Florence unbuttoned her coat, but Randall felt satisfied when he had thrown his off, as a man does who is comfortably at home.

"Do you want to dance tonight?" Lura asked. She slid around to the keyboard of the baby grand, and sat down facing them. She could not play, but she took a music roll from a cabinet back of her and let Randall insert it for her. While she worked the pedals, she made gay, funny remarks across the Chinese embroidery that draped the piano. Randall liked dancing here, in this big warm room. Her hospitality gave him a feeling of proprietorship. While he was here the room was actually his.

"Shall I play for you and Randall to dance, Mrs. White?" Florence asked while Lura was reversing the record.

"I'm dying to. It's been such a stupid day."

Florence did not need the player. Her fingers began a slow waltz.

"It sounds positively hymnal, Floy. I gave you something you could really spin your feet to, when I played for you."

Lura leaned across the back of the piano and waved a fan she had left there. Florence's hands fell from the keyboard, and she held one of them toward the fan. Lura continued to wave it indolently. Florence flushed and quickened her time to a fox trot. When she had finished, it was Randall who asked her to play it over again.

"I wish Floy weren't going on that visit now," Lura said, when they had danced to the farther end of the room.

"So do I."

"But you'll go on with your crowd, and never think of coming to see me."

"Yes—I will, sometimes, if you want me. You don't think I'd forget how good you've been to us, do you?"

"I have more fun with you—and Floy, than I do with anybody."

"Do you really?"

She nodded as they danced back

toward Florence. "You won't forget, will you, Ranny?"

"I couldn't."

She left them a few minutes to bring in a tray of dainties, and Randall was contrite over the trouble she had gone to. One trouble with the middle-aged people he knew was that they never thought young people were capable of fine distinctions. Usually they believed they had done all that was expected of them if they delivered a sandwich that tasted well. Mrs. White's dainties smacked of half a dozen delicious flavors, and were as complicated in their picturesqueness as lodge emblems. They were indeed symbols of the effort of which Lura believed Randall worthy.

Florence nibbled at one, and begged an early departure because of her packing. Lura held her arm around the girl's shoulders as she walked to the door. Florence's head drooped backward like a flower that has been touched by a burning sun.

"You're a naughty butterfly to sail away for a visit now, when we can hardly spare you. You'll miss the Club dance, too."

Lura was standing, now, straight against the wall. Her eyelids were half closed, but from under them she looked steadily at Randall. "You're a heartless butterfly, I said."

"It's polite to go when one is invited," Florence answered, moving toward the door.

Outside, she turned to Randall impulsively, "I wish we didn't have the car here. The air's so good I'd rather walk."

"Feels nippy to me after that cozy inside."

"I thought it was too warm in there. Why did we go to Mrs. White's anyway?" She was standing under the winter stars, holding her face up to the cool night.

Randall opened the car door for her. "Why—because she makes us have such a good time."

"I didn't have a very good time."

"You didn't?" he asked in surprise.

"You're just tired from the trouble of fussing over this visit. We'll let 'er out for a little spin before you start packing your third trunk."

He turned the car on to a brightly lighted pavement.

"All the clothes I have won't more than fill one trunk," Florence said with a little laugh.

"Say—you know, Lura must have a lot of them," he blundered on, "and everything always matches."

"My fan did go rather well with her dress."

"I never saw you carry one just like that."

"Oh, yes you have, Randall. It's almost my only ball room asset. It just didn't look the same when I carried it. Mrs. White borrowed it a month ago to have her picture taken, and I've been wondering if she means to return it."

"Why didn't you ask her for it?"

"A girl doesn't like to. If she's gracious enough to loan something to a friend, she wants the friend to return it of her own accord."

"That's fishing a long way out for trouble, I should think."

Randall was irritated over Florence's diffidence. He didn't see any use in trying to be complex. Lura White was as open faced as a clock. She never allowed herself an unhappy moment over mental hesitations. Randall half frowned at Florence's fingers twitching in and out, as they lay in her lap. He thought she lacked poise tonight, or needed some of the certainty that comes after youth has felt its way long enough to hold to established position. She was like a pendulum that does not know its own swing. And yet he had been thinking that Florence was perfect.

He gave the wheel of the car a petulant twist, and turned back. When he and Florence came into her house, he found a note asking him to call up Mrs. White. He came back from the telephone with a triumphant smile.

"Lura has a package she wants to give you before you leave, and she for-

got it when we were there. She asked me to drive over for it. I won't be gone a minute."

II

As he drove back, Randall thought that Florence had not been quite fair to Lura. Why shouldn't Florence be glad to lend her a fan when Lura was so generous with her hospitality? He could see no reason at all for freezing up because Lura forgot to return it promptly. As he came past the windows of the living room to her door, he could see her lounging in a big chair, holding a magazine. The lights were out except for the one that sent its glow over her hair.

When he stopped a second by the window he could see that she was not reading. The open pages had fallen forward against her gown, and her head was thrown back against a gold brocade cushion. Her eyes were bright with some kind of expectancy, and a smile flashed into them when he rang the bell.

"Come in Ranny; you'll freeze out there."

"I can't keep Florence waiting."

"She isn't out in the car, is she?"

"No, at home. Is the package ready?"

"Your ears are as red as the coals in the fireplace. You'll turn blue next from the cold. Come on in."

Randall stepped into the hall, and laid his hat on a table. He walked in and spread his hands before the fire. She came and stood beside him. He did not want to talk. The silence was the same he had experienced with girls his own age. But there was something about it that was nearer breaking. Girls hardly breathed at all, as if they must hold to themselves every dear moment. Lura White's breath was quick and shattered. In blind necessity Randall broke the silence.

"You're—you're just as if you were waiting here for someone."

"No, I wasn't—but I was glad when you came."

"You're awfully good to put up with our nonsense for an evening—for all the evenings you have us here."

"Oh, Ranny," she pouted, "you talk as if I were old."

"You're not a bit, you know. You're just one of us."

"Then you won't neglect me while Florence is away?"

"Of course not. Is the package ready?"

She leaned in front of him to take it from the mantel. Her hair was so smooth in the light that he wanted to touch it. But the sound of the tissue paper crinkling, as she handed him the package, changed his mood.

"You didn't say when you were coming, Ranny," she said as he took it from her.

"I don't know—some day soon. You don't think I'll forget?"

"I don't want you to," she added, wistfully.

When he came down the porch steps, she was sitting again under the shade of the lamp. From the top of the tissue paper projected the shaded pink tip of a feather fan. Florence had gone up to finish her packing when he brought it in to her. He called up the stairs to her, and she came to sit on the landing. Some elasticity had snapped out of her.

"I almost wish I weren't going," she said as she gazed at her black slippered feet, crossed in front of her.

"That's no way to feel about an adventure like this," he offered.

"Once I'm there, it will be fun," she answered. "It's the loveliest old house you ever saw. It has two tiers of porches running all around, and halls so big and wide that they can be used for dances. And there's old furniture, that's grandmotherly. When I get there my cousins at first don't seem real to me. They're so waited upon, and care free, but I've seen them go through any number of tests and they prove up to their traditions. It's all so precious old that you just have to be good in it—I mean old-fashioned good."

"But not fogey old, do you?"

"No—substantial—and enduring

enough to last for ages. Good-night, Randall; I'll be home before you know I'm gone."

"That's not true. I'm lonesome already."

"Keep jolly young . . . and you'll be all right."

III

RANDALL went home, wondering what she meant by that. She had been acting old herself tonight, as if she held herself above him because he had done something childish. She appeared older than Lura White. To Randall, years had become very confusing. When he went back for Florence's fan, Lura had given him moments that he thought would be eternal, and so they were timeless. Moments, years, ages were all incalculable. He was beginning to believe that seconds might be all that counted in a life-time.

A week passed in which Randall was very busy with some new work at his father's office. Lura White was almost out of his mind. And then one day, she started into it when he wasn't thinking of her at all. He had not been quite able to forget those seconds before her fireplace. Their very quality of subconsciousness tantalized him. They were nothing he could value by any standard he knew, but they were fastened in his brain and he could not throw them out.

He was glad when one of the boys asked him to bring Lura to chaperon the Club dance the following Thursday. Seeing her would re-establish old relations that he thought were free from mystery.

He did feel jolly young when he called for her. He had Madeleine Davis and Cecil Young in the back seat of the car, and Cecil was in one of his funniest moods. He had been joking about everything from the moon to the pavement, and had just finished a yarn about taking the mayor's hat by mistake, when Randall stopped the car in front of Lura's door. She came out bareheaded, her hair blacker than the

night. The white fur collar of her blue velvet cloak lay against her face like a down pillow. She was laughing softly to herself.

"I have just a little bit of a guilty feeling, and you'll have to make me forget all about it, Rannie. Jack came home at seven tonight after three weeks on the road, and he has a foolish notion that I ought to stay home with him."

"Why didn't you tell me? Or bring him along—you know we'd be glad to have him."

"Oh, he wouldn't come. He just wants to be home."

"Don't blame him for wanting you there. Stay Lura—I'll get somebody—mother's out of town—maybe Cecil's mother would come at the last minute."

"Aren't you flattering to the wrinkles I haven't got?" she pouted, and slipped her hand into the curve of his arm. "I'm going on just the same."

She straightened frigidly when she saw Madeleine and Cecil in the car. "So we're to be a foursome?"

As she gave them a stiff nod she drew the folds of her cloak around her and waited silently for Randall to start the car.

But she renewed her gayety when the orchestra played the first dance. Randall was rather proud of her. A very young couple bumped against them, and the girl turned frightfully red, while the boy only stammered apologies. Randall couldn't imagine Lura acting as stupid as they did. She carried herself superbly in and out of every situation. When the encore began, he whispered impulsively,

"You're beautiful, tonight."

"Really, do you think so?"

"Yes—some of the girls are awkward beside you!"

She frowned. "Why do you always make that sort of distinction? If you only knew, age makes no difference one way or the other."

"That's what I was trying to say," he answered.

"But back in your mind you were defending yourself for it. Just to show you that it isn't necessary, I'll tell you

about a dance I went to in Philadelphia with Jack last fall. A beautiful boy asked me to waltz—really, I could hardly look sidewise, he was so perfect, and while we were dancing, I asked him to tell me who the young girl was dancing a little ahead of us, in an apricot chiffon dress. I thought he wasn't looking in quite the right direction, but he answered promptly and proudly, 'That's my mother.' 'I don't believe you know which one I mean—the one with the silver slippers and silver lace.' He turned then to look at the girl I meant. 'Oh, that is my grandmother. Isn't she a wonder?' You see I couldn't tell grandmothers from anyone else. Age doesn't make any difference, Rannie."

"What does then?" he laughed.

"Nothing—so long as we're having such an adorably good time."

Randall was glad that his name was down for the next dance, too.

When the party was over, he left her standing like a luminous statue in the darkened doorway of her house.

"You made a promise you haven't kept."

"I never do that. What was it," Randall asked.

"You ought to remember for yourself."

"Save me the trouble," he answered lightly.

"You were coming to call."

"I will come. I thought we had imposed on your hospitality so much that—"

"Nonsense, Rannie. Don't go burrowing like that for excuses. If you don't want to come, just say so." Her voice held a pretense of bitterness.

"I will. What about tomorrow night? Mr. White will be here then, and—"

"Yes, he will be, and I have to devote some attention to him, you know. He is only here for over Sunday, and we want a little time to ourselves. Come Monday evening."

Randall's vague instinct was to hunt for some excuse, but Lura was making him feel rather foolish as it was. He

could think of no adequate reason why he shouldn't go.

"All right. Thank you for chaperoning the dance."

"The most popular chaperones are noted for oversights—and I couldn't bear not to be popular," she laughed, and closed the door.

IV

RANDALL anticipated Monday night. He had begun to miss Florence, and to wonder how many Kentucky gallants were making her hours pass quickly. Lura offered a welcome diversion.

Although it was still late winter, she met him in a soft ruffled spring dress. It shimmered with orange and green. She was like a well tended tree that has persuaded the gentlest winds to sway it. Her voice, too, held the sound of murmuring leaves. Lura knew the art of cadence. Her tone could be soft or husky with emotion, or she could make it toss out words of laughing nonsense with a motion that matched the toss of her head.

"I waited dinner for you."

"Not all this time? It must be nearly nine. I didn't know you expected me."

"I didn't. As far as that goes, I'm not sure I expected you at all. But it pleased me to think you were coming to dinner; so I waited—and had fun waiting."

"But I just finished at home. Uncle Tom is visiting us. He requires extra large dinners."

"That awfully solemn man who's so bald that his eyebrows look lonesome all by themselves? No wonder you left home right after dinner! Have one more bite with me, won't you?"

"I couldn't, but don't let me keep you. You must be starved."

"I never care about food, unless somebody talks to make it jolly."

"I'll do that. But don't think that because I just ate I can scintillate."

"That's a good beginning, Ranny, such a very good one that I'm going to give you a taste of my precious remnant of sparkling Burgundy."

"You're joking."

"I am not."

From a bottle on the buffet she poured him a small glass almost full, and then she brushed to one side the silver that had been set at the place opposite hers. "And in return, you must keep me from being lonesome."

He sat down in the place that had been kept for him, and sipped the smooth liquid. It warmed his throat and made talking to Lura very easy. He forgot all about her age. The room had never been so cozy before. Lura hardly touched her dinner, but Randall talked on and on.

They moved into the living room presently, and leaned against the mulberry velvet cushions. Warm silences fell between his words. Lura sat under the tall lamp at his elbow, its light making her hair shine like ebony. The soft shadows hugged her white throat, and lost themselves in the edges of her hair. She crossed her hands above her knees and lent instant sympathy to every subject he began. He never quite finished anything, for she made him believe that she understood without speech. He gained an impression of endless giving. When he left, she had his promise to come again on Thursday night.

There was no doubt this time about his going. Lura had tethered him with a rope so meticulously woven that he did not feel it pulling or binding. He did not know what made him go.

When he entered the room, the air was almost too sweet. In its tropic stillness, Lura's voice was like a strain of sad harmony. She sat by him with a semblance of that enduring patience of which only children sometimes are capable, when uncomprehendingly they accept pain.

"Ranny, did you ever guess how unhappy I am?"

"You?" He turned to her quickly. "I always think of you as the happiest person I know."

"Jack and I are so—so out of tune with each other."

Randall was trying to remember something he had heard just the other

day about Lura's husband. He searched her face, which he saw now was unfathomable, and inwardly he searched his own mind. Then it came to him, "Lura White keeps her husband's nose close against the grindstone."

Randall looked around the pretty room that, even allowing for the economy of Lura's clever manipulation, showed a lavish expenditure of money.

"Do you know—the girls think you're lucky, because Mr. White hands you everything on a silver platter?"

"He's not stingy. I don't mean that. But he just bores me. He's so phlegmatic—and middle-aged. He wants to make me settled and old, and I can't stand it, Ranny. He doesn't like me to be impulsive. I hate weighing my actions." Her shoulder pressed against Randall's.

"But Lura, what can you do about it?"

"I want to go away somewhere,—but if I do that, Ranny, I'd die for not seeing you."

"Me?" Her amorous expression dizzied him like an intense perfume.

"Yes. I want you to take me away."

"Lura!" He pulled himself back from her with a start. Her breath was so near that he could feel its warmth.

"Rannie, you've made me love you, and now—"

She leaned nearer and nearer. Sud-

denly the room was unbearably breathless and hot. He pushed her hands from his shoulders as if they had been two branding irons that had already left their mark. He closed his eyes because the sight of her left him with dread, and somehow he found his way out of the room.

The air outside was like a cool hand on his forehead. The memory of Florence cleared in his brain. She made him think of the tulips growing in his mother's sunny window. She was as pink and straight and natural as they. The sunshine must love her, as it loved the flowers. *She* was springtime. He shuddered as he looked back, and thought of Lura White hanging onto youth by the shreds of flattering affection she could win from boys.

He still had not discovered the connection between the different kinds of middle-age and the different kinds of youth, but he knew that Lura White's middle-age was ugly. Beside it, Carrie Jones sloshing her scrub-brush had a kind of pathetic beauty, because while she accepted middle-age without hope, she played fair. His mother had lived up to middle-years, and won their blessing. Florence would grow into her kind of middle-age, which would have a glory of its own. But there was nothing about Lura White but ugliness.



A WOMAN pleases another woman by admiring her hat. She offends her by getting one like it.



LOOPHOLE—An opening in the law through which you can see a lot of money.



An Old Woman

By Lewis Randolph

I PASSED her one day on my way to work.
She was at work, too, nosing around
In garbage cans.

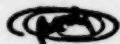
Her face was gray as ashes,
Or her hair.
And she had on a man's coat,
Gray with ashes.
It blew about her shriveled form,
And reached her knees.
She shuffled in a pair of man's shoes,
About number twelve.
In her hand she carried a black bag.
A crust of bread, a string, an old shoe,
Or whatever else she found
In the garbage cans,
She put into the black bag.

This hag was some man's mother,
Had been some man's wife,
Or sweetheart.

But now she lives alone,
In a basement,
And has ten thousand dollars
In a savings bank.



THERE are two types of men with whom it is extremely unsafe to entrust your wife on an ocean voyage—those who have myopic astigmatism of the left eye, and those who have not.



Double Profit

By Hubert Fillay

UN instant encore, le père Bouju se confondit en remerciements et en courbettes; puis, quand M. Marlingros eût disparu au tournant du sentier, le vieux paysan se redressa pour rire silencieusement.

—En voilà un qui ne nous coûtera toujours pas la peine de le ramasser à c' soir! . . .

Et le bonhomme agita gaiment, à bout de bras, le lapin de garenne dont Marlingros lui avait fait cadeau.

Grâce à la confiance dont m'honorait Bouju, j'obtins l'explication de cette formule d'une concision par trop apocalyptique.

Et j'eus une fois de plus la preuve de la duplicité paysanne.

—Ben sûr, mon bon monsieur, que ce diable de lapin ne nous coûtera pas la peine de le ramasser ce soir, puisque le voilà, raide mort, prêt d'entrer dans notre huche. . . .

"Depuis que mossieu Marlingros et ses amis ont affermé la chasse, faudrait tout de même pas qu'ils se figurent que nous nous privons du gibier qui mange nos récoltes!

"Arrière, que ce serait bien malheureux de nourrir des bestiaux, sans jamais y goûter.

"De temps en temps, vous le comprenez bien, la fourchette d'un pésan, aussi bien que la fourchette d'un gâs de la ville, aime travailler dans une gibelote. . . . Quand l'envie m'en prend, Dieu merci, je ne me prive pas des lapins de Mossieu Marlingros. Des fois même, j'attends pas qu'il soit disposé à m'en donner. . . .

"Tenez, ce soir, par exemple. . . . Mais, après tout, ce sont des affaires qui ne regardent que moi. . . ."

S. S.—July—9

Après avoir longuement insisté, prié, supplié, je décidai le père Bouju à compléter ses révélations.

—Ce maudit gibier, vous le savez bien, pas vrai mossieu? il n'a pas de cesse qu'il n'ait rongé, perdu, le meilleur, le plus clair de nos récoltes. . . . Le blé, le seigle, l'avoine, tout lui est bon, tout y passe. . . .

"On ne peut pourtant pas perdre son temps et son argent à faire pousser du grain que le lapin dévore, au fur et à mesure que la tige verte sort de terre! . . . On réclame, mais, va te faire fiche! souvent-il faut plaider, dépenser de l'argent, gros comme soi, pour avoir quatre sous. . . . Et encore quand le juge de paix n'est pas trop dur à la détente, quand on a de bons experts et quand les actionnaires de la chasse ne nous entraînent pas au Tribunal du chef-lieu.

"Au début, point malin, je m'y suis laissé prendre à ces plaideries, mais, une fois que j'ai été échaudé, je n'y suis plus retourné sans prendre mes précautions. . . .

—Vos précautions?

—Dame, oui, pour sûr! . . . Quand c'est l'époque où les lapins commencent à causer leurs dégâts, je m'arrange, et je suis toujours sûr d'y trouver mon compte.

"Les actionnaires de la chasse ont entouré leurs bois, leurs taillis en rive de mes em blaves, avec des beaux treillages de fil de fer tout neufs. . . . Ces treillages la, ça gêne les lapins, ça les empêche de sortir dans nos champs, d'y faire des dégâts, des dégâts sérieux, visibles à l'œil nu, même par quelqu'un qui n'y connaît rien. . . . Alors un soir (comme ce soir, tenez), on s'entend

avec quelques bons gâs, on renverse les treillages et l'on s'en va avec trois ou quatre chiens courants, pas trop gueulars, faire une tournée dans les taillis. Rabattus sur les champs, vous pensez si les lapins, les grands lièvres, s'en paient un souper fin! . . . Elles ne se refusent rien, les pauvres betes, et pour leur donner du cœur à l'ouvrage, pendant qu'elles s'occupent, nous rentrons chez nous vider un saladier de vin,—chaud et sucré comme il faut.

"Vers minuit, c'est le moment de reposer les treillages, de remettre les clôtures sur pied.

"Et puis, les chiens lâchés, nous voila repartls, munis de triques, au long des sacrés treillages, tandis que nos chiens donnent la chasse au gibier saoul de mangeaille.

"Les lapins, les lièvres accourent au bois. Mais, qui trouve la porte fermée, la clôture debout? . . . C'est Janot Lapin! L'imbécile ne sait plus quoi faire de lui, il bute le long des fils de fer, il pousse comme un sourd. . .

Nos chiens et nos triques se chargent de le tranquilliser une fois pour toutes.

"Allez, petits! Bonsoir! un tour au sac!

"Lapins et lièvres ramassés, il n'y a plus qu'à porter notre chasse à la ville. Les marchands de gibier, les hôteliers sont ravis de trouver à bon compte du gibier si frais et si bien caillu.

"C'est pour ça que je vous disais, il y a deux minutes: "Je n'aurai pas la peine de le ramasser, ce petit lapin que Mossieu Marlingros m'a donné. . ."

"Il n'y a qu'une chose de triste là-dedans: voilà autant de dégâts que Mossieu Malingros et ses amis n'auront pas à me payer. Mais bast! dans la quantité, le résultat sera le même. . . et Mossieu Malingros est solide du porte-monnaie."

—Croyez-vous qu'il soit honnête d'agir ainsi? fis-je au père Bouju.

Alors, Bouju, stupéfait:

—De l'honnêteté, de l'honnêteté? . . . Quoi que vous voulez dire? . . . Faut avoir les moyens pour s'en offrir!



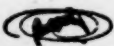
THE art of defining women is the art of stating the not worth knowing in terms like a capitulation.



A WOMAN has become really efficient when she learns to make a conquest seem of the divinely mysterious.



SOME girls are followed by men and some don't use rouge.



Aesthetic Jurisprudence

By George Jean Nathan

I

ART is a reaching out into the ugliness of the world for vagrant beauty and the imprisoning of it in a tangible dream. Criticism is the dream book. All art is a kind of subconscious madness expressed in terms of sanity; criticism is essential to the interpretation of its mysteries, for about everything truly beautiful there is ever something mysterious and disconcerting. Beauty is not always immediately recognizable as beauty; what often passes for beauty is mere infatuation; living beauty is like a love that has outlasted the middle-years of life, and has met triumphantly the test of time, and faith, and cynic meditation. For beauty is a sleep-walker in the endless corridors of the wakeful world, uncertain, groping, and not a little strange. And criticism is its tender guide.

Art is a partnership between the artist and the artist-critic. The former creates; the latter re-creates. Without criticism, art would of course still be art, and so with its windows walled in and with its lights extinguished would the Louvre still be the Louvre. Criticism is the windows and chandeliers of art: it illuminates the enveloping darkness in which art might otherwise rest only vaguely discernible, and perhaps altogether unseen.

Criticism, at its best, is a great, tall candle on the altar of art; at its worst, which is to say in its general run, a campaign torch flaring red in behalf of æsthetic ward-healers. This campaign torch motif in criticism, with its drunken enthusiasm and raucous hollering born of ignorance, together with what may be called the Prince Albert motif, with its

sober, statue-like reserve born of ignorance that, being well-mannered, is not so bumptious as the other, has contributed largely to the common estimate of criticism as a profession but slightly more exalted than Second Avenue auctioneering if somewhat less than Fifth. Yet criticism is itself an art. It might, indeed, be well defined as an art within an art, since every work of art is the result of a struggle between the heart that is the artist himself and his mind that is the critic. Once his work is done, the artist's mind, tired from the bitterness of the struggle, takes the form of a second artist, puts on this second artist's strange hat, coat and checkered trousers, and goes forth with refreshed vigour to gossip abroad how much of the first artist's work was the result of its original splendid vitality and how much the result of its gradually diminished vitality and sad weariness. The wrangling that occurs at times between art and criticism is, at bottom, merely a fraternal discord, one in which Cain and Abel belabour each other with stuffed clubs. Criticism is often most sympathetic when it is apparently most cruel: the propounder of the sternest, hardest philosophy that the civilized world has known never failed sentimentally to kiss and embrace his sister, Therese Elisabeth Alexandra Nietzsche, every night at bed-time. "It is not possible," Cabell has written, "to draw inspiration from a woman's beauty unless you comprehend how easy it would be to murder her." And—"Only those who have firmness may be really tender-hearted," said Rochefoucauld. One may sometimes even throw mud to sound purpose. Consider Karlsbad.

Art is the haven wherein the disillu-

sioned may find illusion. Truth is no part of art. Nor is the mission of art simple beauty, as the text books tell us. The mission of art is the magnification of simple beauty to proportions so heroic as to be almost overpowering. Art is a gross exaggeration of natural beauty: there was never a woman so beautiful as the Venus di Milo, or a man so beautiful as the Apollo Belvedere of the Vatican, or a sky so beautiful as Troyon's, or human speech so beautiful as Shakespeare's, or the song of a nightingale so beautiful as Ludwig van Beethoven's. But as art is a process of magnification, so criticism is a process of reduction. Its purpose is the reducing of the magnifications of art to the basic classic and æsthetic principles, and the subsequent announcement thereof in terms proportioned to the artist's interplay of fundamental skill and overtopping imagination.

The most general fault of criticism lies in a confusion of its own internal processes with those of art: it is in the habit of regarding the business of art as a reduction of life to its essence of beauty, and the business of criticism as an expansion of that essence to its fullest flow. The opposite is more reasonable. Art is a beautiful, swollen lie; criticism, a cold compress. The concern of art is with beauty; the concern of criticism is with truth. And truth and beauty, despite the Sunday School, are often strangers. This confusion of the business of art and that of criticism has given birth to the so-called "contagious," or inspirational, criticism, than which nothing is more mongrel and absurd. Criticism is designed to state facts—charmingly, gracefully, if possible—but still facts. It is not designed to exhort, enlist, convert. This is the business not of the critic, but of those readers of the critic whom the facts succeed in convincing and galvanizing. Contagious criticism is merely a vainglorious critic's essay at popularity: facts heated up to a degree where they melt into caressing nothingness.

But if this "criticism with a glow" is not to be given countenance, even less is

to be suffered the criticism that, in its effort at a fastidious and elegant reserve, leans so far backward that it freezes its ears. This species of criticism fails not only to enkindle the reader, but fails also—and this is more important—to enkindle the critic himself. The ideal critic is perhaps much like a Thermos bottle: full of warmth, he suggests the presence of the heat within him without radiating it. This inner warmth is essential to a critic. But this inner warmth, where it exists, is automatically chilled and banished from a critic by a protracted indulgence in excessive critical reserve. Just as the professional frown assumed by a much photographed public magnifico often becomes stubbornly fixed upon his hitherto gentle brow, so does the prolonged spurious constraint of a critic in due time psychologically hoist him on his own petard. A writer's work does not grow more and more like him; a writer grows more and more like his work. The best writing that a man produces is always just a little superior to himself. There never was a literary artist who did not appreciate the difficulty of keeping up to the pace of his writings. A writer is dominated by the standard of his own writings; he is a slave *in transitu*, lashed, tormented, and miserable. The weak and inferior literary artist, such a critic as the one alluded to, soon becomes the helpless victim of his own writings: like a vampire of his own creation they turn upon him and suck from him the warm blood that was erstwhile his. A pose in time becomes natural: a man with a good left eye cannot affect a monocle for years without eventually coming to need it. A critic cannot write ice without becoming in time himself at least partly frosted.

Paraphrasing Pascal, to little minds all things are great. Great art is in constant conflict with the awe of little minds. Art is something like a wonderful trapeze performer swinging high above the heads of the bewildered multitude and nervous lest it be made to lose its balance and to slip by the periodic sudden loud marvelings of the folks below. The little mind and its little

criticism are the flattering foes of sound art. Such art demands for its training and triumph the countless preliminary body blows of muscular criticism guided by a muscular mind. Art and the artist cannot be developed by mere back-slapping. If art, according to Beulé, is the intervention of the human mind in the elements furnished by experience, criticism is the intervention of the human mind in the elements furnished by aesthetic passion. Art and the artist are ever youthful lovers; criticism is their chaperon.

II

I do not believe finally in this or that "theory" of criticism. There are as many sound and apt species of criticism as there are works to be criticized. To say that art must be criticized only after this formula or after that, is to say that art must be contrived only out of this formula or out of that. As every work of art is an entity, a thing in itself, so is every piece of criticism an entity, a thing in itself. That "Thus Spake Zarathustra" must inevitably be criticized by the canons of the identical "theory" with which one criticizes "Tristan and Isolde" is surely difficult of reasoning.

To the Goethe-Carlyle doctrine that the critic's duty lies alone in discerning the artist's aim, his point of view and, finally, his execution of the task before him, it is easy enough to subscribe, but certainly this is not a "theory" of criticism so much as it is a foundation for a theory. To advance it as a theory, full-grown, full-fledged and flapping, as it has been advanced by the Italian Croce and his admirers, is to publish the preface to a book without the book itself. Accepted as a theory complete in itself, it fails by virtue of its several undeveloped intrinsic problems, chief among which is its neglect to consider the undeniable fact that, though each work of art is indubitably an entity and so to be considered, there is yet in creative art what may be termed an aesthetic genealogy that bears heavily upon comprehensive criticism and that renders the artist's aim, his

point of view and his execution of the task before him susceptible to a criticism predicated in a measure upon the work of the sound artist who has just preceded him.

The Goethe-Carlyle hypothesis is a little too liberal. It calls for qualifications. It gives the artist too much ground, and the critic too little. To discern the artist's aim, to discern the artist's point of view, are phrases that require an amount of plumbing, and not a few foot-notes. It is entirely possible, for example, that the immediate point of view of an artist be faulty, yet the execution of his immediate task exceedingly fine. If carefully planned triumph in art is an entity, so also may be undesigned triumph. I do not say that any such latter phenomenon is usual, but it is conceivable, and hence may be employed as a test of the critical hypothesis in point. Unschooled, without aim or point of view in the sense of this hypothesis, Schumann's compositions at the age of eleven for chorus and orchestra offer the quasi-theory some resistance. The question of the comparative merit of these compositions and the artist's subsequent work may not strictly be brought into the argument, since the point at issue is merely a theory and since theory is properly to be tested by theory.

Intent and achievement are not necessarily twins. I have always perversely thought it likely that there is often a greater degree of accident in fine art than one is permitted to believe. The aim and point of view of a bad artist are often admirable; the execution of a fine artist may sometimes be founded upon a point of view that is, from an apparently sound critical estimate, at striking odds with it. One of the finest performances in all modern dramatic writing, upon its critical reception as such, came as a great surprise to the writer who almost unwittingly had achieved it. Art is often unconscious of itself. Shakespeare, writing popular plays to order, wrote the greatest plays that dramatic art has known. Mark Twain, in a disgusted moment, threw off a practical joke, and it turned out to be literature.

A strict adherence to the principles enunciated in the Goethe-Carlyle theory would result in a confinement of art for all the theory's bold aim in exactly the opposite direction. For all the critic may accurately say, the aim and point of view of, say, Richard Strauss in "Don Quixote" and "A Hero's Life," may be imperfect, yet the one critical fact persists that the executions are remarkably fine. All things considered, it were perhaps better that the critical theory under discussion, if it be accepted at all, be turned end foremost: that the artist's execution of the task before him be considered either apart from his aim and point of view, or that it be considered first, and then—with not too much insistence upon them—his point of view and his aim. This would seem to be a more logical æsthetic and critical order. Tolstoi, with a sound, intelligent and technically perfect aim and point of view composed second-rate drama. So, too, Maeterlinck. Synge, by his own admissions adjudged critically and dramatically guilty on both counts, composed one of the truly first-rate dramas of the Anglo-Saxon stage.

In its very effort to avoid pigeon-holing, the Goethe-Carlyle theory pigeon-holes itself. In its commendable essay at catholicity, it is like a garter so elastic that it fails to hold itself up. That there may not be contradictions in the contentions here set forth, I am not sure. But I advance no fixed, definite theory of my own; I advance merely contradictions of certain of the phases of the theories held by others, and contradictions are ever in the habit of begetting contradictions. Yet such contradictions are in themselves apposite and soundly critical, since any theory susceptible of contradictions must itself be contradictory and insecure. If I suggest any theory on my part it is a variable one: a theory that, in this instance, is one thing and in that, another. Criticism, as I see it—and I share the common opinion—is simply a sensitive, experienced and thoroughbred artist's effort to interpret, in terms of æsthetic doctrine and his own peculiar soul, the work of another artist

reciprocally to that artist and thus, as with a reflecting mirror, to his public. But to state merely what criticism is, is not to state the doctrine of its application. And herein, as I see it, is where the theorists fail to cover full ground. The anatomy of criticism is composed not of one theory, but of a theory—more or less generally agreed upon—upon which are reared in turn other theories that are not so generally agreed upon. The Goethe-Carlyle theory is thus like a three-story building on which the constructor has left off work after finishing only the first story. What certain aspects of these other stories may be like, I have already tried to suggest.

I have said that, if I have any theory of my own, it is a theory susceptible in practice of numerous surface changes. These surface changes often disturb in a measure this or that phase of what lies at the bottom. Thus, speaking as a critic of the theater, I find it impossible to reconcile myself to criticizing acting and drama from the vantage point of the same theory, say, for example, the Goethe-Carlyle theory. This theory fits criticism of drama much better than it fits criticism of acting, just as it fits criticism of painting and sculpture much more snugly than criticism of music. The means whereby the emotions are directly affected, and soundly affected, may at times be critically meretricious, yet the accomplishment itself may be, paradoxically, artistic. Perhaps the finest acting performance of our generation is Bernhardt's *Camille*: its final effect is tremendous: yet the means whereby it is contrived are obviously inartistic. Again, "*King Lear*," searched into with critical chill, is artistically a poor instance of playmaking, yet its effect is precisely the effect striven for. Surely, in cases like these, criticism founded strictly upon an inflexible theory is futile criticism, and not only futile but eminently unfair.

Here, of course, I exhibit still more contradictions, but through contradictions we may conceivably gain more secure ground. When his book is once opened, the author's mouth is shut.

(Wilde, I believe, said that; and though for some peculiar reason it is today regarded as suicidal to quote the often profound Wilde in any serious argument, I risk the danger.) But when a dramatist's play or a composer's symphony is opened, the author has only begun to open his mouth. What results, an emotional art within an intellectual art, calls for a critical theory within a critical theory. To this composite end, I offer a suggestion: blend with the Goethe-Carlyle theory that of the aforementioned Wilde, to wit, that beauty is uncriticizable, since it has as many meanings as man has moods, since it is the symbol of symbols, and since it reveals everything because it expresses nothing. The trouble with criticism—again to pose a contradiction—is that, in certain instances, it is often too cerebral. Feeling a great thrill of beauty, it turns to its somewhat puzzled mind and is apprised that the thrill which it has unquestionably enjoyed from the work of art might conceivably be of pathological origin, a fremitus or vibration felt upon percussion of a hydatid tumor.

The Goethe-Carlyle theory, properly rigid and unyielding so far as emotional groundlings are concerned, may, I believe, at times safely be chuckled under the chin and offered a communication of gipsy ardour by the critic whose emotions are the residuum of trial, test and experience.

III

COQUELIN put it that the footlights exaggerate everything: they modify the laws of space and of time; they put miles in a few square feet; they make minutes appear to be hours. Of this exaggeration, dramatic criticism—which is the branch of criticism of which I treat in particular—has caught something. Of all the branches of criticism it is intrinsically the least sober and the least accurately balanced. It always reminds me somehow of the lash in the hands of Cæcus, in "The Frogs," falling upon Bacchus and Xanthias to discover which of the two is the divine, the latter meanwhile endeavouring to conceal the pain

that would betray their mortality by various transparent dodges. Drama is a two-souled art: half divine, half clownish. Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist who ever lived because he alone, of all dramatists, most accurately sensed the mongrel nature of his art. Criticism of drama, it follows, is similarly a two-souled art: half sober, half mad. Drama is a deliberate intoxicant; dramatic criticism, aromatic spirits of ammonia; the reaction is never perfect; there is always a trace of tipsiness left. Even the best dramatic criticism is always just a little dramatic. It indulges, a trifle, in acting. It can never be as impersonal, however much certain of its practitioners may try, as criticism of painting or of sculpture or of literature. This is why the best criticism of the theater must inevitably be personal criticism. The theater itself is distinctly personal; its address is directly personal. It holds the mirror not up to nature, but to the spectator's individual idea of nature. If it doesn't, it fails. The spectator, if he is a critic, merely holds up his own mirror to the drama's mirror: a reflection of the first reflection is the result. Dramatic criticism is this second reflection. And so the best dramatic criticism has about it a flavour of the unconscious, grotesque and unpremeditated. "When Lewes was at his business," Shaw has said, "he seldom remembered that he was a gentleman or a scholar." (Shaw was speaking of Lewes' free use of vulgarity and impudence whenever they happened to be the proper tools for his job.) "In this he showed himself a true craftsman, intent on making the measurements and analyses of his criticism as accurate, and their expression as clear and vivid, as possible, instead of allowing himself to be distracted by the vanity of playing the elegant man of letters, or writing with perfect good taste, or hinting in every line that he was above his work. In exacting all this from himself, and taking his revenge by expressing his most laboured conclusions with a levity that gave them the air of being the unpremeditated whimsicalities of a man who had perversely taken to writing about

the theater for the sake of the jest latent in his own outrageous unfitness for it, Lewes rolled his stone up the hill quite in the modern manner of Mr. Walkley, dissembling its huge weight, and apparently kicking it at random hither and thither in pure wantonness."

Mr. Spingarn, in his exceptionally interesting, if somewhat overly indignant, treatise on "Creative Criticism," provides, it seems to me, a particularly clear illustration of the manner in which the proponents of the more modern theories of criticism imprison themselves in the extravagance of their freedom. While liberating art from all the old rules of criticism, they simultaneously confine criticism with the new rules—or ghosts of rules—wherewith they free art. If each work of art is a unit, a thing in itself, as is commonly agreed, why should not each work of criticism be similarly a unit, a thing in itself? If art is, in each and every case, a matter of individual expression, why should not criticism, in each and every such case, be similarly and relevantly a matter of individual expression? In freeing art of definitions, has not criticism been too severely defined? I believe that it has been. I believe that there may be as many kinds of criticism as there are kinds of art. I believe that there may be sound analytical, sound emotional, sound cerebral, sound impressionistic, sound destructive, sound constructive, and other sound species of criticism. If art knows no rules, criticism knows no rules—or, at least, none save those that are obvious. If Brahms' scherzo in E flat minor, op. 4, is an entity, a work in and of itself, why shouldn't Huneker's criticism of it be regarded as an entity, a work in and of itself? If there is in Huneker's work inspiration from without, so, too, is there in Brahms': if Brahms may be held a unit in this particular instance with no consideration of Chopin, why may not Huneker with no consideration of Brahms?

If this is pushing things pretty far, it is the Spingarns who have made the pushing necessary. "Taste," says Mr.

Spingarn, "must reproduce the work of art within itself in order to understand and judge it; and at that moment aesthetic judgment becomes nothing more or less than creative art itself." This rings true. But granting the perfection of the taste, why define and limit the critical creative art thus born of reproduction? No sooner has a law been enunciated, writes Mr. Spingarn, than it has been broken by an artist impatient or ignorant of its restraints, and the critics have been obliged to explain away these violations of their laws or gradually to change the laws themselves. If art, he continues, is organic expression, and every work of art is to be interrogated with the question, "What has it expressed, and how completely?", there is no place for the question whether it has conformed to some convenient classification of critics or to some law derived from this classification. Once again, truly put. But so, too, no sooner have laws been enunciated than they have been broken by critics impatient or ignorant of their restraints, and the critics of critics have been obliged to explain away these violations of the laws, or gradually to change the laws themselves. And so, too, have these works of criticism provided no place for the question whether they have conformed to some convenient classification of the critics of criticism or to some law derived from this classification.

"Criticism," said Carlyle, his theories apart, "stands like an interpreter between the inspired and the uninspired, between the prophet and those who hear the melody of his words, and catch some glimpse of their material meaning, but understand not their deeper import." This is the best definition that I know of. It defines without defining; it gives into the keeping of the interpreter the hundred languages of art and merely urges him, with whatever means that may best and properly suit his ends, to translate them clearly to those that do not understand; it sets him free from the very shackles which Carlyle himself, removing from art, wound in turn about him.

IV

Two of the most noteworthy productions of the theatrical year 1920-1921 were reserved for the tail end of the season: Molnar's "Liliom" and Eugene O'Neill's "Gold." The latter, as I write, has not yet seen the curtain's rise and so I am unable to report what footlight handling the play has received. But, as I observed a year ago on laying down the manuscript, it marks still another step forward on the part of the most able dramatist that the American theater has thus far produced. The tale of man's eternal and meaningless pursuit of the gold in life that his soul refuses to know as dross, the play is excellently planned and admirably executed. The final act has not the measure of imagination of the preceding acts, but the work as a whole is beautifully superior to nine-tenths and more of the literature of the native stage.

"Liliom" is a tender and eloquent manuscript, finely given life by the become important Theater Guild. For the last ten years I have been writing of this play, only to be met with the usual charges that I was again making up names of foreign plays in order to impress people with my travel and learning, or was again finding merit in the Austro-Hungarian-German drama to the disparagement of the American. My amusement is therefore perhaps to be forgiven when I read the very gentlemen who made these charges now excitedly proclaiming the play a masterpiece (which it is not) and eulogizing the Theater Guild for producing it instead of some native and inferior manuscript.

"Liliom," with its sympathetic picture of the soul of a roughneck in conflict with life and after-life, represents,

with "Das Märchen vom Wolf" and "Der Gardeofficier," the best work that the playwright who is dubbed "the romantic little boy of the Hungarian theater" has so far done. It does not, as the reviewer for the *Globe* seems to believe, "break new paths for the playwright"; it is no "new form"—there are half a dozen familiar plays like it in this respect in Continental dramatic literature; but it does represent an uncertain soul agreeably brave in its uncertainty. Molnar's uncertainty is, in the bulk of his work, the secret of his theatrical charm. It communicates itself not only to his themes, but to his dramatic technique. He is a masculine Barrie who, while by no means of the importance of Barrie, periodically presents himself as the superior in imagination and detail. Mr. Simonson's settings for "Liliom" are excellent: he strikes what seems to me to be precisely the right compromise between reality and unreality. Mr. Joseph Schildkraut gives a good account of himself in the central rôle, and Miss Eva Le Gallienne fails to weaken the actor-proof rôle of Liliom's wife for all her alien invasions of its spirit. The high water-mark of the play is the love scene between these two characters in the second episode. No better instance of dramatic writing has been vouchsafed this season. The Theater Guild is rapidly coming to the fore as a factor in American dramatic production. It is intelligently planned, and intelligently conducted. Censured for its neglect to provide a hearing for American playwrights, it has replied that it stands always ready to give the native playwright that hearing once he writes a respectable play. A proper and effective answer. But does not the Theater Guild consider O'Neill's "The Straw" a respectable play? Or O'Neill's "The Ole Devil"?



Literary Notes

By H. L. Mencken

I

The Old Russia

A FINE glow and gusto are in the "Memoirs" of the late Count Sergei Yulievitch Witte (*Double-day*), even as clawed into the vulgate by Abraham Yarmolinsky. The apologia of the Hon. Robert Lansing, lately reviewed in this place, has the furtive, timorous air of a Czerny exercise played by a little girl with pigtailed down her back; this farewell harangue and defiance of the celebrated Russian is like a tone-poem for grand orchestra—and with no mutes on the trombones and ophicleides. There is a Slavic swagger to the fellow—but under it a pawky Dutch shrewdness. The appearance of things never deceives him; his sharp eyes always detect the substance underneath; his whole story is the story of a combat of wits, and it is not often that he gets the worst of it. Some of the chapters, for all their raucous ill-nature, are positively exhilarating, particularly the chapter describing the author's historic visit to the United States in 1905. Certainly no man ever crossed the Western Ocean with a harder job in front of him, or less encouragement for it behind him. Russia had been given a fearful beating by the Japs, the peace conference was being staged by the Japophile Roosevelt, the American newspapers and plain people were all howling the Japanese way, and at home in Russia everyone looked for a colossal failure, and all the Bourbons of the old regime, from the Czar down to the humblest secretary of legation, were preparing to put the blame upon Witte. He had been recalled from

Coventry, in fact, for that precise purpose. No one wanted to sacrifice a more genial and popular man on such a forlorn hope. It was a perfect chance for the Old Guard to jump from under and wring the withers of their chief enemy.

Nevertheless, Witte muddled through. More, he dragged down the Japs, for all their talents for intrigue, to a defeat almost as complete as that they had administered to the Russians on the battlefield. They went into the Portsmouth conference eager to grab everything in sight, and quite confident that Roosevelt would help them to do it; they came out with almost nothing. Few more decisive victories are to be heard of in the history of diplomacy. It was a stupendous triumph for one unaided man, and that man was Witte. In his singularly amusing and instructive book he tells how it was managed. What made it possible, in brief, was his extraordinarily acute grasp of American psychology. He saw that the Japs had the mob behind them, and that Roosevelt, as usual, was running with the mob. His task was to win the mob to his own side. And how did he do it? By the simplest of all devices, to wit, by stooping to rub noses with the mob, by flattering the mob, by satisfying its ancient and incurable thirst to be on "Hello, Bill!" terms with a superior man. Witte says in plain words that it disgusted him—that his blood ran cold every time he had to be polite to impertinent and idiotic newspaper reporters, or to hobnob with social pushers, or to exhibit himself in public like a United States Senator or a two-headed boy. But he stuck to his grim

task pertinaciously, and pretty soon results began to show themselves. The newspapers, but lately crowing so lustily over the Japanese victory, now began to hint that the Russians, after all, were very fine fellows. In a little while a few of them were discreetly pro-Russian; in a little while longer nearly all of them were pro-Russian. When the boys in the street began cheering Witte as he passed, Roosevelt saw the light. Once so ardently pro-Japanese, he now proceeded to bombard the already wobbled Japs with advice to take what they could get and take it quickly, and presently they were in a panic, and the astute Witte drew his snickersnee across their gullets. The whole episode was delightful, and it is recounted with just the right frankness. Ah, that our own elder statesmen were so honest—and so clever!

From the tale various useful principles are to be deduced, and one of the most interesting of them is this: that the success of a public man under a democracy depends very largely upon the degree of his politeness to newspaper reporters. If an All-Wise Providence has implanted within him a capacity for meeting their assaults and intrusions with an amiable air, if he can answer their maladroitness and innumerable questions without swearing at them, if he knows how to play upon their petty vanities, then he is certain to be set before the plain people as a profound and patriotic fellow, and well fitted for all the high enterprises of state. But if, when they rouse him at 2 A.M. to answer the telephone, or break into his dinner party with a fair creature to present some imbecile query from the home office, or buttonhole him ostentatiously upon some great occasion—if, so tried, he shows the slightest sign of annoyance, then they will depict him as one dubious and accursed. I have a suspicion that the late Woodrow cooked his goose when he barred the reporters from the White House. Instantly they were shut from the presence they began to hint that the poor man was crazed by his own greatness, and hence a dan-

gerous chief for a democratic republic. Woodrow lacked the talent for communing with his inferiors. All the time he spent in his early manhood learning how to wear a dress-suit, to eat from the side of the spoon and to dance the varsoviennne was wasted. He should have joined the Red Men, the Odd Fellows or the Knights of Pythias, and so learned how to carry himself gracefully with tin-roofers, butter-and-egg dealers, and collectors for instalment houses. Dr. Harding, if my agents in Washington are to be believed, shows a far better training for statecraft. He is a Moose in high standing, and has the amiability that goes therewith. Compared to the corn-doctors, milk-wagon drivers and cellar-diggers who shared the awful secrets of the fraternity with him out in Marion, the newspaper correspondents who besiege him in Washington all seem, with their refined manners and neat walking sticks, to be master-minds, and so it is no hardship for him to have copious speech with them. If Harding keeps on as he has begun he will have a successful Presidency. He stands in no need of the heroic resolution of Count Witte. All that is necessary is for him to let nature take its course.

But I forget the Count and his moving tale of hey-diddle-diddle in the Russia that has now gone slambanging down the chutes of time. It is a tale full of gaudy colors—a tale of barbaric violence and extravagance. One finds motives in it that are quite unintelligible to westerners, and acts that seem to belong to the Middle Ages. Witte himself is almost a Moslem in his devotion to the autocratic principle. In Petrograd he passed for a Liberal, and even for a sort of radical, but he constantly protests his firm faith in the Russian God and the Russian czar. At first blush it is difficult to reconcile this faith with his frequent exposure of the concrete czar's stupidities. Nicholas, in fact, was a thumping ass, and Witte is by no means reluctant to say so, and, what is more, to offer the proof. Nevertheless, he never wavers in his convic-

tion that a czar is what Russia needs. Well, maybe the paradox is no paradox, after all. What Witte expounds in his book is the practical business of governing a huge and loosely articulated empire, and obviously it is easier to achieve that task with a single despot, however block-headed, at the head of things than it would be with sovereignty vested in a great horde of idiots, of thirty races and a million different minds. The servant of a despot has only to win and hornswoggle the single despot; it may be a disagreeable job, but it is at least possible of accomplishment within a reasonable time, and so all the rest of the servant's hours may be devoted to the execution of his official duties. But the servant of a democracy is never sure of his boss. His whole time must be devoted to wooing the mob that holds his fate within its hands—a mob that is incompetent, in the very nature of things, to understand what he is trying to do or to estimate his doing of it. True statesmanship is almost impossible to such a man; he must be the politician morning, noon and night. Czarism, whatever its defects otherwise, at least produced and utilized a Witte. His story is full of interest. Go read it.

II

The Husbandman

"Dust," by Mr. and Mrs. E. Haldermann-Julius (*Brentano*), is obviously an attempt to do for the American peasant what Sinclair Lewis did for the small-town American in "Main Street." In place of Dr. Kennicott there is Martin Wade, the honest tiller of the soil; in place of the wife Carol there is the wife Rose. Wade, like Kennicott, is deaf to all the sweet whisperings of the spirit; he esteems a carload of manure far above the works of Rabindranath Tagore, and regards a well-filled silo as worth five "Götterdämmerungs." The dust of Kansas is ground into his soul. The one thing that he can comprehend is material progress—the multiplication of cattle, the increase of his lands, the piling up

of money in the Fallon Bank. When, one day, he decides that it would be more comfortable to have a wife, he puts on his Sunday clothes, shines his celluloid collar, goes into Fallon, and makes his addresses to the first unmarried woman he meets. Alas, it is not only a wife that he gets, but also a chautauqua. Rose, of course, is not an intellectual of the calibre of Carol; there is no sign that she has ever heard of Maeterlinck, or even of Robert W. Service. But within her narrow prairie limits she too has her dreams. She can vision a comfortable home, with carpets on the floors, a bathroom with hot and cold water, and maybe a cozy-corner. She is disposed to see something beautiful in birds and flowers. She has a romantic view of love. All this at first astonishes Martin, and then enrages him. A proposal to sacrifice a hog-house or a potato-planter in order to buy a battery of golden-oak sofas seems to him to be as inhuman as a proposal to make soup by cutting off the children's ears. So he and Rose drift apart, and go wandering down the long, long trail almost as strangers, and in the end Martin dies and leaves all his slavishly-earned dollars behind him, and Rose goes into Fallon, and buys a little house, and proceeds to wait for her own summons.

A grim little story, not without its pathos, but spoiled by very amateurish writing. Worse, by a very defective grasp of character. The harsh, unyielding, unimaginative, sordid, swinish peasant who begins and ends the story is often forgotten in the middle, and in place of him we behold a gentleman apparently lifted out of the story-books. At one time, for example, Martin is flustered by a cutie who comes to live at the house—a distant relative of some vague sort—and this is how he talks to Rose about her:

I love her with every beat of my heart—she has brought something new into my life, something sacred. . . . She has been in this house only a few days, and already I am alive with a new fire. It seems as if these hours are the only ones in which I have ever really lived—nothing else matters. Nothing!

Is this a Kansas yokel speaking? Certainly not. It is, I guess, simply an English actor hip-deep in the third act of a Pinero play. The same thing happens to Martin more than once. He is real only occasionally. The story has the effect of a somewhat careless first sketch. The character is well imagined, but very clumsily executed. One misses all the little details that make for verisimilitude; the sly touches that explain motive and purpose; above all, the fine skill that maintains consistency, probability, logic, and so holds the whole thing together. It is, in brief, a bad novel—but on an extremely interesting theme. Lewis, I hear, is to strike upward in his successor to "Main Street"; it will deal with a town of 100,000 or more. Who will strike downward? Who will get the American farmer and his wife into a solid and respectable book? Who will do the American "La Terre"? The existing Yokeliana, so far as I know it, is all sentimental. It depicts the peasant as an earnest Christian who suffers that there may be a steady supply of yearling beeves at the Chicago stockyards, and that curb-brokers in New York may get fresh eggs and plenty of lima-beans. I doubt that any such public-spirit infests the actual hind. His motive is probably exactly what Mr. and Mrs. Haldeman-Julius represent it to be, *i.e.*, the same unenlightened self-interest that makes men work in coal-mines when it is so much easier to get converted and become Methodist clergymen. But whatever his motive, there is the man—a child of God like the rest of us, and full of trials and tribulations. We either slobber over him or laugh at him. He deserves to be treated seriously. He is the fundamental man, the fellow whose shoulders hold us all up, what the circus acrobats call the "understander."

Often, shooting through the country on the brothel upholstery of the Pullman Company, a book in my hands, a cigar warming my nose and a porter stumbling over my feet, I roll my eye out of the window and contemplate the diligent rustic in his field. Up and

down, day after day, world without end! Say the furrows are four feet apart. This means that he must hoof behind his horses nearly 11,000 feet to an acre, or more than two miles. To plow ten acres he must walk twenty miles; to plow a hundred, two hundred! . . . Well, all I ask is that you try walking even two blocks across a plowed field. There is no romance in that life, messieurs. For every mess of asparagus that you eat, a human back somewhere must ache; every time that you wolf a slab of *Käsekuche* some far-flung cowman or other must get up at 3.30 A.M. Is it any wonder that the fellow, when Winter gives him leisure, hatches ideas of a subversive and anti-social character—farm loans, free silver, Prohibition? Is it remarkable that he hates everything that you and I venerate, from J. P. Morgan & Company to the Ziegfeld "Follies"? . . . But he remains a mystery to me, and I'd like some light upon him. Who will put him into a book, accurately, meticulously, with dreiserian relentlessness? . . .

The reading of novels is still opposed, deep down in my subconscious, by some obscure Freudian inhibition. I find it next to impossible to work up any gusto for them; they lie upon my desk, unread for months. Thus I must offer you second-hand reports on the new ones. Agents whose discretion I have several times tested in delicate affairs, both literary and non-literary, tell me that the following are worth reading: "Jake," by Eunice Tietjens (*Boni*); "The House in Dormer Forest," by Mary Webb (*Doran*); "Blind Mice," by C. Kay Scott (*Doran*); "Snow Over Elden," by Thomas Moulton (*Doran*); "Original Sinners," by H. W. Nevins (*Huebsch*); "The Man Who Did the Right Thing," by Sir Harry H. Johnston (*Macmillan*); "The Narrow House," by Evelyn Scott (*Boni*), and "The House by the River," by A. P. Herbert (*Knopf*). If God spares me I shall read all these anon. But at the moment I am not up to it.

III

Various Books

JOSEPH CONRAD'S "Notes on Life and Letters" (*Doubleday*) is a reprint of magazine pieces on all sorts of subjects, from the style of Henry James to the technical questions raised by the loss of the *Titanic*, and ranging in date from 1898 to last year. The stuff has the appearance of having been thrown together with a shovel, and much of it, it must be said frankly, is very feeble; only the most fanatical Conradista will swallow the whole without grimaces. Perhaps the most interesting chapters—some of them are mere footnotes—are those on Poland, the author's ancient home, but even here there is much matter that has lost all value since it was written. To what purpose, for example, does Conrad reprint a short article, dated 1916, proposing that Poland be taken under the protection of a triumvirate consisting of England, France and Russia? And to what end does he tell us, under date of 1919, of Poland's "hereditary sense of respect for the rights of individuals and States," and predict that it will never "seek its prosperity in aggressive action or in moral violence"—with M. Grabski so recently and so fragrantly in memory, and the brigandage in Silesia even closer, and the aimless, senseless massacre of Jews not forgotten? The Polish republic is but three years old, and yet it is already a curse to Europe. . . . Conrad is far more convincing when he writes of James, Anatole France, Daudet, Guy de Maupassant and Turgenev; here a great artist has his wise say about other great artists, and it is apposite and shrewd. It is curious that no essay upon Flaubert, his true master, is in the book. He owes more to Flaubert, I suspect, than he owes to anyone else, and he is not one to forget such debts. Maybe the Flaubertiad will come later. What is now offered is a volume so uneven and so badly edited that it must inevitably disappoint the majority of the author's admirers.

William McFee's "An Ocean Tramp" (*Doubleday*) is vastly better stuff; here the disciple bests the master. The book was first issued in London in 1908, but quickly got out of print and of late has been almost unobtainable. To the new edition the author prefixes an introduction in which, with rather too much garrulity, he expounds the motives that induce an otherwise sane man to take to the high seas, or, more specifically, to the tiny cabin and sweaty job of an engineer in the merchant service. "The sea," he says, "is a way of escape from the intolerable burdens of life." And what are the intolerable burdens of life? Answer: business, friendship, and love, especially love. Once one is "out beyond the bar, watching the hard, bright glitter of impersonal land-lights die suddenly in the fresh gusts," one is able to breathe a deep sigh of relief, and to give thanks to God. No frou-frou of skirts is ever heard in the engine-room; no leering hussy is hidden between the high pressure and low pressure cylinders. A man thus delivered from *das ewig weibliche* is free to stretch himself, to go without collar or socks, to spit over the side as he lists; above all, he has peace and leisure to cultivate his soul. The doctrine is sound. There is naught but folly in the common notion that women are an inspiration to the man of ideas. They are nothing of the sort. Their function is not to goad him to his work; it is to reward him after his work is accomplished. The best thinking in the world is done in monasteries, Pullman smoke-rooms, Turkish baths and ducking-blinds, where women are not admitted. . . . But this is only the preface to Mr. McFee's book. The work itself is an extremely good piece of writing—a brilliant and moving picture of the rolling deep as the men who know its every mood see it—a picture with fine splotches of raw color, and yet mainly low-toned and poetical and even a bit mystical. It is better writing than McFee has got into any of his other books; at its best it almost deserves to

be put alongside Conrad's "The Mirror of the Sea."

I find little that is worth reading in "A Last Diary," by the late W. N. P. Barbellion (Bruce Frederick Cummings) (*Doran*). Cummings is the naturalist whose "Journal" was printed a year or two ago, with a preface by H. G. Wells. "A Last Diary" is presented as a selection from the best of his hitherto unpublished notes, but there is actually little in it save the depressing chatter of an incurable invalid. I search it in vain for ideas; the poor fellow was evidently quite devoid of them. Put his two books beside the well-known works of La Bashkirtseff and La MacLane, and at once his vacuity becomes painfully evident. He will be forgotten quickly. . . . A great hollowiness also marks the "Thought Relics" of Rabindranath Tagore (*Macmillan*), the reigning idol of the New Thought circles and women's clubs. Tagore tackles great problems in this tall, thin book: the meaning of life, the nature of infinity, and so on. He brings exactly the same illumination to them that one may get by reading the *Nautilus* magazine. How long will it take the Western world to discover that there is nothing in the so-called philosophy of the East save a burble of empty words? I often wonder that it prospers so amazingly, even among the half-wits devoted to the New Thought. Often I suspect that its success is chiefly scenic—that what fetches the fat women is not its intellectual content, but the romantic make-up of its prophets. Shave the average swami and put him into the cheap pepper-and-salt suit that professors at Yale and Princeton have to wear, and I doubt that even New Thinkers would pay any heed to him. . . . As an antidote, I offer you "Stories from the Old Testament," by L. Pearsall Smith (*Luce*), a capital piece of buffoonery, very suitable for presentation to your pastor. . . . And if you still thirst for good books, Maxim Gorky's "Reminiscences of Tolstoi," translated by S. S. Kotliansky and Leonard Woolf (*Huebsch*).

And André Tridon's "Psychoanalysis and Dreams" (*Knopf*), another of his clear and simple explanations and criticisms of the Freudian doctrines. And "The Emperor Jones," by Eugene O'Neill (*Liveright*), a collection of three excellent plays. But of this last Dr. Nathan has already told you. . . .

Arnold Bennett's "Things That Have Interested Me" (*Doran*) is a chaotic hodge-podge of notes upon all things under the sun, but nevertheless I have found it amusing from start to finish, and, in more than one place, not a little instructive. The virtue of Bennett, like that of any other respectable artist, is that he is very unlike his average countryman. He reacts to all conceivable stimuli in a way that differs vastly from the reaction of the normal Englishman. Like W. L. George he shows, at times, a touch of Gallic spirit; there is something light and airy about him, the reverse of the suety manner of his race. Here the things he deals with are often trivialities, and sometimes his observations upon them are extremely casual, but all the same he manages to get away from the obvious, even when he is farthest from the profound. Upon the intellectual peculiarities of Bennett I have discoursed in this place in the past, and at some length. He is not primarily a novelist, despite his success as a writer of novels, for he is devoid of that elemental feeling which is the heart's blood of first-rate fiction; he cannot make us feel with his characters, and so they often lose the colors of life and become mere abstractions. But he is one of the sharpest critics of contemporary civilization that England has produced; no other Englishman has dealt more penetratingly with the life of our time. He is quite free from the pontifical manner of such fellows as Chesterton and Wells; he is also quite free from the heavy diabolism of Moore and Shaw. But from his aloof watch-tower he looks down with eyes that distinguish instantly between a hawk and a handsaw, and what he has seen he has the faculty of describing simply and vividly. Thus even his

most trifling notes have a certain ironical brilliance. He is what the Germans call a *Kopf*. (To the Printer: Make it *Knopf* and I'll have you poisoned.)

IV

Americanese

GILBERT M. TUCKER'S "American English" (*Knopf*) is largely devoted to demonstrating that most of the discussion of the national vulgate in the past has been pedantic and absurd. My own work, "The American Language" (the revision of which now undermines my health), is not spared, though in justice to it I must note that Mr. Tucker does not accuse it of pedantry. What he is chiefly against is the doctrine that the only correct standards of English are those prevailing in southern England, and that every time American practise diverges from these standards the Americano is a barbarian. The fact is, of course, that American English is noticeably superior to British English in several important respects, and that not the least of these superiorities lies in the learned department of spelling. Here even the more intelligent Englishmen are against their own rules and in favor of the American rules, and every year one notices a greater tendency among them to spell *wagon* with one *g* instead of two, and to leave the supernumerary *e* off such words as *ax* and *asphalt*, and to spell *cider* and *tire* with an *i* instead of a *y*. The English *-our* ending, the main hallmark of English spelling, dies harder. George Bernard Shaw abandoned it years ago, and recently the London *Nation*, a journal of the very highest consideration, followed suit, but the great majority of English still regard the American *-or* ending as almost obscene. The argument commonly made for the *-our* ending by British pedagogues is that it serves to distinguish words brought in from the French—that it has an etymological purpose. Why any sane man should

waste his time and thought upon an etymological purpose is not stated, but even so the argument is nonsensical, for the *u* is omitted by the English from many words that are indubitably French, e.g., *exterior* and *progenitor*, and inserted in many words that are not French at all, e.g., *arbour*, *honour* and *tumour*.

Here Mr. Tucker achieves some very shrewd and convincing criticism. He is less persuasive when he comes to determine the meaning of the term Americanism. His tendency now is to follow Lounsbury and Richard Grant Wright in barring out hundreds of terms that are as thoroughly American as chewing-gum. Certainly it is absurd to exclude such words as *moccasin* on the ground that the English have borrowed them and have no synonyms of their own. In truth, Mr. Tucker quickly finds his own rule too narrow, for after rejecting *moccasin* he puts down *buffalo*. Again, he is against admitting "perfectly regular and explanatory compounds," such as *office-holder* and *fly-time*, and yet he is presently listing *air-line*, *come-down* and *high-toned*. Yet again, he excludes *drawing-room car* (evidently he means *parlor-car*) on the ground that "inventors have the right to name their products, and if the English choose to call them something else, that change cannot make any sort of ism of the original appellation," and yet he lists *buckskin*, *butterine* and *cat-boat*. I find a few errors in his lists. He says that a *floater* is a person who "may vote either way"; the word actually designates a man brought in to vote in a district or districts in which he doesn't actually live. He calls *mucker* an Americanism; it is really quite as British as *bloody*. He speaks of *patent-outsides*; the country printers all know them as *patent-insides*. He says that *P. Q.* means "pretty deuced quick"—!!! . . . But he has made an interesting and very valuable book. It represents the labor of forty years. It was worth doing.





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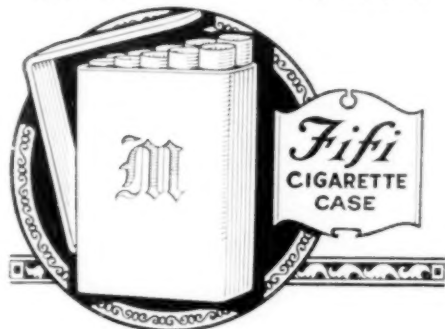
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It never rains but it pours!

IT WAS "company night."
BUT WHEN I got home,
I FOUND the Browns,
HAD A sick baby
AND COULDN'T come,
SO I chortled "Oh, joy,
WON'T SUE and I have
SWELL EATS for two!"
BUT NO, Sue said,
"YOU DON'T suppose,
I'D WASTE all this food,
JUST ON you!"
AND SO I said,
"LET'S PHONE the Smiths."
BUT THEY had headaches,
THEN WE tried the Joneses,
AND THEY fell for it,
AND WHEN grub for four,
WAS JUST about ready,
THE PHONE bell tinkled,
AND THE Brown baby was better,
AND A minute later.

THE SMITHS changed their mind
AND THE Missus fainted.
"OH, WELL," I said,
"THE MORE the merrier
WHAT'S THE difference?
IF THERE isn't enough food
I'LL FEED the males
ON THE cigarettes that satisfy
AND YOU women can talk
AND BETWEEN the two,
WE'LL ALL be Satisfied."



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